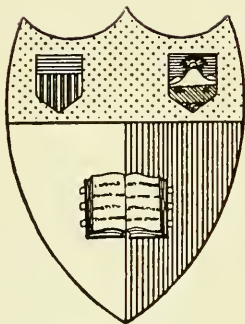


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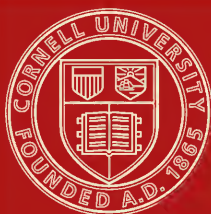
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THE ALDINE EDITION
OF THE BRITISH
POETS



THE POETICAL WORKS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
VOL. VI

THE POETICAL WORKS OF
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

EDITED WITH MEMOIR BY

EDWARD DOWDEN

IN SEVEN VOLUMES



VOL. VI

LONDON

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EDITOR'S NOTE.

FOLLOWING, as the present edition does, the last text of Wordsworth's lifetime, 1849-50, "The Excursion" is given immediately after the "Ode. Intimations of Immortality." "The Prelude" follows as a poem of posthumous publication. Had this course not been adopted, the whole of "The Excursion" with Appendices and Indexes would have been too bulky for one volume, and "The Excursion" must have been divided between vol. vi. and vol. vii., which would have been highly undesirable. The reader, however, must bear in mind that "The Prelude" is a poem introductory to the unfinished "Recluse," of which "The Excursion," designed for the Second Part, was the only Part completed. "The Prelude," therefore, should properly be read before "The Excursion."

E. D.

THE EXCURSION.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WILLIAM, EARL OF LONSDALE, K.G.
ETC., ETC.

OFT, through thy fair domains, illustrious Peer !
In youth I roamed, on youthful pleasures bent ;
And mused in rocky cell or sylvan tent,
Beside swift-flowing Lowther's current clear.
—Now, by thy care befriended, I appear
Before thee, LONSDALE, and this Work present,
A token (may it prove a monument !)
Of high respect and gratitude sincere.
Gladly would I have waited till my task
Had reached its close ; but Life is insecure,
And Hope full oft fallacious as a dream :
Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask
Thy favour ; trusting that thou wilt not deem
The offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
July 29, 1814.

PREFACE TO THE EDITION OF 1814.

THE Title-page announces that this is only a portion of a poem; and the Reader must be here apprised that it belongs to the second part of a long and laborious Work, which is to consist of three parts.—The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding, to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which “The Excursion” is a part, derives its Title of **THE RECLUSE**.—Several years ago, when the Author retired to his native

mountains, with the hope of being enabled to construct a literary Work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled, the Recluse; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement.—The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labour which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself

justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished, or unpublished, if he had not thought that the labour bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public, entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavours to please and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen.—Nothing further need be added, than that the first and third parts of “The Recluse” will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author’s own person; and that in the intermediate part (“The Excursion”) the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

It is not the Author’s intention formally to announce a system: it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. And in the mean time the following passage, taken from the conclusion of the first book of “The Recluse,” may be acceptable as a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem.

“On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
—To these emotions, whencesoe’er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—

I would give utterance in numerous verse.
 Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,
 And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith ;
 Of blessed consolations in distress ;
 Of moral strength, and intellectual Power ;
 Of joy in widest commonalty spread ;
 Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
 Inviolatè retirement, subject there
 To Conscience only, and the law supreme
 Of that Intelligence which governs all—
 I sing :—‘ fit audience let me find though few ! ’

“ So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the
 Bard—

In holiest mood. Urania, I shall need
 Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
 Descend to earth or dwell in highest heaven !
 For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
 Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
 To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
 All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
 That ever was put forth in personal form—
 Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
 Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
 I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
 The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
 Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
 By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
 As fall upon us often when we look
 Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man—
 My haunt, and the main region of my song.
 —Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
 Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
 Which craft of delicate Spirits hath composed
 From earth’s materials—waits upon my steps ;
 Pitches her tents before me as I move,
 An hourly neighbour. Paradise, and groves
 Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
 Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be
 A history only of departed things,
 Or a mere fiction of what never was ?
 For the discerning intellect of Man,
 When wedded to this goodly universe
 In love and holy passion, shall find these
 A simple produce of the common day.
 —I, long before the blissful hour arrives,

Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation :—and, by words
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures ; while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted :—and how exquisitely, too—
Theme this but little heard of among men—
The external World is fitted to the Mind ;
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish :—this is our high argument.
—Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of madding passions mutually inflamed ;
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish ; or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities—may these sounds
Have their authentic comment ; that even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn !—
Descend, prophetic Spirit ! that inspir'’st
The human Soul of universal earth,
Dreaming on things to come ; and dost possess
A metropolitan temple in the hearts
Of mighty Poets : upon me bestow
A gift of genuine insight ; that my Song
With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
Shedding benignant influence, and secure,
Itself, from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their sway
Throughout the nether sphere !—And if with this
I mix more lowly matter ; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
Contemplating ; and who, and what he was—
The transitory Being that beheld
This Vision ; when and where, and how he lived ;—
Be not this labour useless. If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then—dread Power !
Whose gracious favour is the primal source
Of all illumination—may my Life

Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners ;—nurse
My Heart in genuine freedom :—all pure thoughts
Be with me ;—so shall thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end !”

BOOK FIRST.

THE WANDERER.

ARGUMENT.

A summer forenoon.—The Author reaches a ruined Cottage upon a Common, and there meets with a revered Friend, the Wanderer, of whose education and course of life he gives an account.—The Wanderer, while resting under the shade of the Trees that surround the Cottage, relates the History of its last Inhabitant.

THE WANDERER.

'Twas summer, and the sun had mounted high :
Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
Through a pale steam ; but all the northern
 downs,
In clearest air ascending, showed far off
A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung 5
From brooding clouds ; shadows that lay in
 spots
Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed ;
To him most pleasant who on soft cool moss
Extends his careless limbs along the front 10
Of some huge cave, whose rocky ceiling casts
A twilight of its own, an ample shade,
Where the wren warbles, while the dreaming
 man,
Half conscious of the soothing melody,
With side-long eye looks out upon the scene, 15
By power of that impending covert, thrown
To finer distance. Mine was at that hour
Far other lot, yet with good hope that soon
Under a shade as grateful I should find
Rest, and be welcomed there to livelier joy. 20
Across a bare wide Common I was toiling
With languid steps that by the slippery turf
Were baffled ; nor could my weak arm disperse
The host of insects gathering round my face,
And ever with me as I paced along. 25

Upon that open moorland stood a grove,
The wished-for port to which my course was
bound.

Thither I came, and there, amid the gloom
Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms,
Appeared a roofless Hut ; four naked walls 30
That stared upon each other !—I looked round,
And to my wish and to my hope espied
The Friend I sought ; a Man of reverend age,
But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
There was he seen upon the cottage-bench, 35
Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep ;
An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.

Him had I marked the day before—alone
And stationed in the public way, with face
Turned toward the sun then setting, while that
staff

40

Afforded, to the figure of the man
Detained for contemplation or repose,
Graceful support ; his countenance as he stood
Was hidden from my view, and he remained
Unrecognised ; but, stricken by the sight, 45
With slackened footsteps I advanced, and soon
A glad congratulation we exchanged
At such unthought-of meeting.—For the night
We parted, nothing willingly ; and now
He by appointment waited for me here, 50
Under the covert of these clustering elms.

We were tried Friends : amid a pleasant vale,
In the antique market-village where was passed
My school-time, an apartment he had owned,
To which at intervals the Wanderer drew, 55
And found a kind of home or harbour there.
He loved me ; from a swarm of rosy boys
Singled out me, as he in sport would say,

For my grave looks, too thoughtful for my
years.

As I grew up, it was my best delight 60

To be his chosen comrade. Many a time,

On holidays, we rambled through the woods :

We sate—we walked ; he pleased me with
report

Of things which he had seen ; and often
touched

Abstrusest matter, reasonings of the mind 65

Turned inward ; or at my request would sing

Old songs, the product of his native hills ;

A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,

Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed

As cool refreshing water, by the care 70

Of the industrious husbandman, diffused

Through a parched meadow-ground, in time of
drought.

Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse :

How precious when in riper days I learned

To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice 75

In the plain presence of his dignity !

Oh ! many are the Poets that are sown

By Nature ; men endowed with highest gifts,

The vision and the faculty divine ;

Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse, 80

(Which, in the docile season of their youth,

It was denied them to acquire, through lack

Of culture and the inspiring aid of books,

Or haply by a temper too severe,

Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame) 85

Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led

By circumstance to take unto the height

The measure of themselves, these favoured
Beings,

All but a scattered few, live out their time,

Husbanding that which they possess within, 90
And go to the grave, unthought of. Strongest
minds

Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least ; else surely this Man had not left
His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed. 94
But, as the mind was filled with inward light,
So not without distinction had he lived,
Beloved and honoured—far as he was known.
And some small portion of his eloquent speech,
And something that may serve to set in view
The feeling pleasures of his loneliness, 100
His observations, and the thoughts his mind
Had dealt with—I will here record in verse ;
Which, if with truth it correspond, and sink
Or rise as venerable Nature leads,
The high and tender Muses shall accept 105
With gracious smile, deliberately pleased,
And listening Time reward with sacred praise.

Among the hills of Athol he was born ;
Where, on a small hereditary farm,
An unproductive slip of rugged ground, 110
His Parents, with their numerous offspring,
dwelt ;
A virtuous household, though exceeding poor !
Pure livers were they all, austere and grave,
And fearing God ; the very children taught
Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
And an habitual piety, maintained 116
With strictness scarcely known on English
ground.

From his sixth year, the Boy of whom I
speak,
In summer, tended cattle on the hills ;

But, through the inclement and the perilous
days 120

Of long-continuing winter, he repaired,
Equipped with satchel, to a school, that stood
Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge,
Remote from view of city spire, or sound 124
Of minster clock! From that bleak tenement
He, many an evening, to his distant home
In solitude returning, saw the hills
Grow larger in the darkness; all alone
Beheld the stars come out above his head,
And travelled through the wood, with no one
near 130

To whom he might confess the things he saw.

So the foundations of his mind were laid.
In such communion, not from terror free,
While yet a child, and long before his time, 134
Had he perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
So vividly great objects that they lay
Upon his mind like substances, whose presence
Perplexed the bodily sense. He had received
A precious gift; for, as he grew in years, 140
With these impressions would he still compare
All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and
forms;

And, being still unsatisfied with aught
Of dimmer character, he thence attained
An active power to fasten images 145
Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines
Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
The liveliness of dreams. Nor did he fail,
While yet a child, with a child's eagerness
Incessantly to turn his ear and eye 150
On all things which the moving seasons brought
To feed such appetite—nor this alone

Appeased his yearning :—in the after-day
 Of boyhood, many an hour in caves forlorn,
 And 'mid the hollow depths of naked crags 155
 He sate, and even in their fixed lineaments,
 Or from the power of a peculiar eye,
 Or by creative feeling overborne,
 Or by predominance of thought oppressed,
 Even in their fixed and steady lineaments 160
 He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
 Expression ever varying !

Thus informed,

He had small need of books ; for many a
 tale

Traditionary round the mountains hung, 164
 And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
 Nourished Imagination in her growth,
 And gave the Mind that apprehensive power
 By which she is made quick to recognise
 The moral properties and scope of things.
 But eagerly he read, and read again, 170
 Whate'er the minister's old shelf supplied ;
 The life and death of martyrs, who sustained,
 With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
 Triumphantly displayed in records left
 Of persecution, and the Covenant—times 175
 Whose echo rings through Scotland to this
 hour !

And there, by lucky hap, had been preserved
 A straggling volume, torn and incomplete,
 That left half-told the preternatural tale,
 Romance of giants, chronicle of fiends, 180
 Profuse in garniture of wooden cuts
 Strange and uncouth ; dire faces, figures dire,
 Sharp-kneed, sharp-elbowed, and lean-ankled
 too,
 With long and ghostly shanks—forms which
 once seen

Could never be forgotten !

In his heart, 185

Where Fear sate thus, a cherished visitant,
 Was wanting yet the pure delight of love
 By sound diffused, or by the breathing air,
 Or by the silent looks of happy things,
 Or flowing from the universal face 190
 Of earth and sky. But he had felt the power
 Of Nature, and already was prepared,
 By his intense conceptions, to receive
 Deeply the lesson deep of love which he, 194
 Whom Nature, by whatever means, has taught
 To feel intensely, cannot but receive.

Such was the Boy—but for the growing
 Youth

What soul was his, when, from the naked top
 Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
 Rise up, and bathe the world in light ! He
 looked— 200

Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
 And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
 Beneath him :—Far and wide the clouds were
 touched,
 And in their silent faces could he read
 Unutterable love. Sound needed none, 205
 Nor any voice of joy ; his spirit drank
 The spectacle : sensation, soul, and form,
 All melted into him ; they swallowed up
 His animal being ; in them did he live,
 And by them did he live ; they were his life. 210
 In such access of mind, in such high hour
 Of visitation from the living God,
 Thought was not ; in enjoyment it expired.
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request ;
 Rapt into still communion that transcends 215
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,

His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him ; it was blessedness and love !

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain tops,
Such intercourse was his, and in this sort 220
Was his existence oftentimes *possessed*.
O then how beautiful, how bright, appeared
The written promise ! Early had he learned
To reverence the volume that displays
The mystery, the life which cannot die ; 225
But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
All things, responsive to the writing, there
Breathed immortality, revolving life
And greatness still revolving ; infinite :
There littleness was not ; the least of things 230
Seemed infinite ; and there his spirit shaped
Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*.
What wonder if his being thus became
Sublime and comprehensive ! Low desires,
Low thoughts had there no place ; yet was his
heart 235
Lowly ; for he was meek in gratitude,
Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
And whence they flowed ; and from them he
acquired
Wisdom, which works thro' patience ; thence
he learned
In oft-recurring hours of sober thought 240
To look on Nature with a humble heart,
Self-questioned where it did not understand,
And with a superstitious eye of love.

So passed the time ; yet to the nearest town
He duly went with what small overplus 245
His earnings might supply, and brought away
The book that most had tempted his desires
While at the stall he read. Among the hills

He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
 The divine Milton. Lore of different kind, 250
 The annual savings of a toilsome life,
 His School-master supplied ; books that explain
 The purer elements of truth involved
 In lines and numbers, and, by charm severe,
 (Especially perceived where nature droops 255
 And feeling is suppressed) preserve the mind
 Busy in solitude and poverty.
 These occupations oftentimes deceived
 The listless hours, while in the hollow vale,
 Hollow and green, he lay on the green turf 260
 In pensive idleness. What could he do,
 Thus daily thirsting, in that lonesome life,
 With blind endeavours? Yet, still uppermost,
 Nature was at his heart as if he felt,
 Though yet he knew not how, a wasting
 power 265
 In all things that from her sweet influence
 Might tend to wean him. Therefore with her
 hues,
 Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
 He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.
 While yet he lingered in the rudiments 270
 Of science, and among her simplest laws,
 His triangles—they were the stars of heaven,
 The silent stars ! Oft did he take delight
 To measure the altitude of some tall crag
 That is the eagle's birth-place, or some peak 275
 Familiar with forgotten years, that shows
 Inscribed upon its visionary sides,
 The history of many a winter storm,
 Or obscure records of the path of fire.

And thus before his eighteenth year was
 told, 280
 Accumulated feelings pressed his heart

With still increasing weight; he was o'er-
powered

By Nature; by the turbulence subdued
Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,
And the first virgin passion of a soul 285
Communing with the glorious universe.
Full often wished he that the winds might
rage

When they were silent: far more fondly now
Than in his earlier season did he love
Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the
sounds 290

That live in darkness. From his intellect
And from the stillness of abstracted thought
He asked repose; and, failing oft to win
The peace required, he scanned the laws of
light

Amid the roar of torrents, where they send 295
From hollow clefts up to the clearer air
A cloud of mist, that smitten by the sun
Varies its rainbow hues. But vainly thus,
And vainly by all other means, he strove
To mitigate the fever of his heart. 300

In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus was he reared; much wanting to assist
The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,
And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthened and braced, by breathing in
content 305

The keen, the wholesome, air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.
—But, from past liberty, and tried restraints,
He now was summoned to select the course
Of humble industry that promised best 310
To yield him no unworthy maintenance.
Urged by his Mother, he essayed to teach

A village-school—but wandering thoughts were
then

A misery to him ; and the Youth resigned

A task he was unable to perform. 315

That stern yet kindly Spirit, who constrains
The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,

The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,

(Spirit attached to regions mountainous 319

Like their own stedfast clouds) did now impel

His restless mind to look abroad with hope.

—An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,

Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm,

A vagrant Merchant under a heavy load

Bent as he moves, and needing frequent

rest ; 325

Yet do such travellers find their own delight ;

And their hard service, deemed debasing now,

Gained merited respect in simpler times ;

When squire, and priest, and they who round

them dwelt

In rustic sequestration—all dependent 330

Upon the PEDLAR's toil—supplied their wants,

Or pleased their fancies, with the wares he

brought.

Not ignorant was the Youth that still no few

Of his adventurous countrymen were led

By perseverance in this track of life 335

To competence and ease :—to him it offered

Attractions manifold ;—and this he chose.

—His Parents on the enterprise bestowed

Their farewell benediction, but with hearts

Foreboding evil. From his native hills 340

He wandered far ; much did he see of men,

Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,

Their passions and their feelings ; chiefly those

Essential and eternal in the heart,

That, 'mid the simpler forms of rural life, 345
 Exist more simple in their elements,
 And speak a plainer language. In the woods,
 A lone Enthusiast, and among the fields,
 Itinerant in this labour, he had passed
 The better portion of his time; and there 350
 Spontaneously had his affections thriven
 Amid the bounties of the year, the peace
 And liberty of nature; there he kept
 In solitude and solitary thought
 His mind in a just equipoise of love. 355
 Serene it was, unclouded by the cares
 Of ordinary life; unvexed, unwarped
 By partial bondage. In his steady course,
 No piteous revolutions had he felt,
 No wild varieties of joy and grief. 360
 Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
 His heart lay open; and, by nature tuned
 And constant disposition of his thoughts
 To sympathy with man, he was alive
 To all that was enjoyed where'er he went, 365
 And all that was endured; for, in himself
 Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
 He had no painful pressure from without
 That made him turn aside from wretchedness
 With coward fears. He could *afford* to suffer 370
 With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it
 came

That in our best experience he was rich,
 And in the wisdom of our daily life.
 For hence, minutely, in his various rounds,
 He had observed the progress and decay 375
 Of many minds, of minds and bodies too;
 The history of many families;
 How they had prospered; how they were o'er-
 thrown
 By passion or mischance, or such misrule

Among the unthinking masters of the earth 380
As makes the nations groan.

This active course

He followed till provision for his wants
Had been obtained;—the Wanderer then resolved
To pass the remnant of his days, untasked
With needless services, from hardship free. 385
His calling laid aside, he lived at ease:
But still he loved to pace the public roads
And the wild paths; and, by the summer's
warmth

Invited, often would he leave his home
And journey far, revisiting the scenes 390
That to his memory were most endeared.

—Vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits, un-
damped

By worldly-mindedness or anxious care;
Observant, studious, thoughtful, and refreshed
By knowledge gathered up from day to day;
Thus had he lived a long and innocent life. 396

The Scottish Church, both on himself and
those

With whom from childhood he grew up, had
held

The strong hand of her purity; and still
Had watched him with an unrelenting eye. 400

This he remembered in his riper age
With gratitude, and reverential thoughts.

But by the native vigour of his mind,
By his habitual wanderings out of doors,
By loneliness, and goodness, and kind works,
Whate'er, in docile childhood or in youth, 406
He had imbibed of fear or darker thought

Was melted all away; so true was this,
That sometimes his religion seemed to me
Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods; 410

Who to the model of his own pure heart
 Shaped his belief, as grace divine inspired,
 And human reason dictated with awe.
 —And surely never did there live on earth
 A man of kindlier nature. The rough sports
 And teasing ways of children vexed not him; 416
 Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
 Of garrulous age; nor did the sick man's tale,
 To his fraternal sympathy addressed,
 Obtain reluctant hearing.

Plain his garb; 420

Such as might suit a rustic Sire, prepared
 For sabbath duties; yet he was a man
 Whom no one could have passed without
 remark.

Active and nervous was his gait; his limbs
 And his whole figure breathed intelligence. 425
 Time had compressed the freshness of his cheek
 Into a narrower circle of deep red,
 But had not tamed his eye; that, under brows
 Shaggy and grey, had meanings which it brought
 From years of youth; which, like a Being made
 Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill 431
 To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
 Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

So was He framed; and such his course of
 life
 Who now, with no appendage but a staff, 435
 The prized memorial of relinquished toils,
 Upon that cottage-bench reposed his limbs,
 Screened from the sun. Supine the Wanderer
 lay,
 His eyes as if in drowsiness half shut,
 The shadows of the breezy elms above 440
 Dappling his face. He had not heard the sound

Of my approaching steps, and in the shade
Unnoticed did I stand some minutes' space.
At length I hailed him, seeing that his hat
Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim 445
Had newly scooped a running stream. He rose,
And ere our lively greeting into peace
Had settled, "'Tis," said I, "a burning day :
My lips are parched with thirst, but you, it seems,
Have somewhere found relief." He, at the
word, 450
Pointing towards a sweet-briar, bade me climb
The fence where that aspiring shrub looked out
Upon the public way. It was a plot
Of garden ground run wild, its matted weeds
Marked with the steps of those, whom, as they
passed, 455
The gooseberry trees that shot in long lank
slips,
Or currants, hanging from their leafless stems,
In scanty strings, had tempted to o'erleap
The broken wall. I looked around, and there,
Where two tall hedge-rows of thick alder
boughs 460
Joined in a cold damp nook, espied a well
Shrouded with willow-flowers and plummy fern.
My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheerless spot
Withdrawing, straightway to the shade returned
Wheresat the old Man on the cottage-bench; 465
And, while, beside him, with uncovered head,
I yet was standing, freely to respire,
And cool my temples in the fanning air,
Thus did he speak. "I see around me here
Things which you cannot see: we die, my
Friend, 470
Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
Dies with him, or is changed; and very soon

Even of the good is no memorial left.
—The Poets, in their elegies and songs 475
Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
They call upon the hills and streams to mourn,
And senseless rocks; nor idly; for they speak,
In these their invocations, with a voice
Obedient to the strong creative power 480
Of human passion. Sympathies there are
More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
That steal upon the meditative mind,
And grow with thought. Beside yon spring I
stood,
And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel 485
One sadness, they and I. For them a bond
Of brotherhood is broken: time has been
When, every day, the touch of human hand
Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
In mortal stillness; and they ministered 490
To human comfort. Stooping down to drink,
Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied
The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
Green with the moss of years, and subject only
To the soft handling of the elements: 495
There let it lie—how foolish are such thoughts!
Forgive them;—never—never did my steps
Approach this door but she who dwelt within
A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved her
As my own child. Oh, Sir! the good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer
dust 501
Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
From that forsaken spring; and no one came 505
But he was welcome; no one went away
But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,
The light extinguished of her lonely hut,

The hut itself abandoned to decay,
And she forgotten in the quiet grave. 510

“I speak,” continued he, “of One whose stock
Of virtues bloomed beneath this lowly roof.
She was a Woman of a steady mind,
Tender and deep in her excess of love; 514
Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
Of her own thoughts: by some especial care
Her temper had been framed, as if to make
A Being, who by adding love to peace
Might live on earth a life of happiness.
Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side 520
The humble worth that satisfied her heart:
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
That he was often seated at his loom,
In summer, ere the mower was abroad 525
Among the dewy grass,—in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanished.—They who
passed
At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply,
After his daily work, until the light 530
Had failed, and every leaf and flower were lost
In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
In peace and comfort; and a pretty boy
Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven.

“Not twenty years ago, but you I think 535
Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
Two blighting seasons, when the fields were left
With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to add
A worse affliction in the plague of war:
This happy Land was stricken to the heart! 540
A Wanderer then among the cottages,
I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw

The hardships of that season : many rich
Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor ;
And of the poor did many cease to be, 545
And their place knew them not. Meanwhile,
abridged

Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
To numerous self-denials, Margaret
Went struggling on through those calamitous
years

With cheerful hope, until the second autumn, 550
When her life's Helpmate on a sick-bed lay,
Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
He lingered long ; and, when his strength
returned,

He found the little he had stored, to meet
The hour of accident or crippling age, 555
Was all consumed. A second infant now
Was added to the troubles of a time
Laden, for them and all of their degree,
With care and sorrow : shoals of artisans
From ill-requited labour turned adrift 560
Sought daily bread from public charity,
They, and their wives and children—happier far
Could they have lived as do the little birds
That peck along the hedge-rows, or the kite
That makes her dwelling on the mountain rocks

“ A sad reverse it was for him who long 566
Had filled with plenty, and possessed in peace,
This lonely Cottage. At the door he stood,
And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
That had no mirth in them ; or with his knife 570
Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks—
Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook
In house or garden, any casual work
Of use or ornament ; and with a strange,
Amusing, yet uneasy, novelty, 575

He mingled, where he might, the various tasks
Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
But this endured not ; his good humour soon
Became a weight in which no pleasure was :
And poverty brought on a petted mood 580
And a sore temper : day by day he drooped,
And he would leave his work—and to the town
Would turn without an errand his slack steps ;
Or wander here and there among the fields.
Onewhile he would speak lightly of his babes, 585
And with a cruel tongue : at other times
He tossed them with a false unnatural joy :
And 'twas a rueful thing to see the looks
Of the poor innocent children. ‘ Every smile,’
Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees,
‘ Made my heart bleed.’ ”

At this the Wanderer paused ;
And, looking up to those enormous elms, 592
He said, “ ’Tis now the hour of deepest noon.
At this still season of repose and peace,
This hour when all things which are not at rest
Are cheerful ; while this multitude of flies 596
With tuneful hum is filling all the air ;
Why should a tear be on an old Man’s cheek ?
Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,
And in the weakness of humanity, 600
From natural wisdom turn our hearts away ;
To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears ;
And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
The calm of nature with our restless thoughts ? ”

HE spake with somewhat of a solemn tone : 605
But, when he ended, there was in his face
Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild,
That for a little time it stole away
All recollection ; and that simple tale

Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound. 610
A while on trivial things we held discourse,
To me soon tasteless. In my own despite,
I thought of that poor Woman as of one
Whom I had known and loved. He had re-
hearsed

Her homely tale with such familiar power, 615
With such an active countenance, an eye
So busy, that the things of which he spake
Seemed present; and, attention now relaxed,
A heart-felt chillness crept along my veins.
I rose; and, having left the breezy shade, 620
Stood drinking comfort from the warmer sun,
That had not cheered me long—ere, looking
round

Upon that tranquil Ruin, I returned,
And begged of the old Man that, for my sake,
He would resume his story.

He replied, 625
“It were a wantonness, and would demand
Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
Even of the dead; contented thence to draw
A momentary pleasure, never marked 630
By reason, barren of all future good.
But we have known that there is often found
In mournful thoughts, and always might be
found,
A power to virtue friendly; wer't not so,
I am a dreamer among men, indeed 635
An idle dreamer! 'Tis a common tale,
An ordinary sorrow of man's life,
A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
In bodily form.—But without further bidding
I will proceed.

While thus it fared with them, 640

To whom this cottage, till those hapless years,
Had been a blessed home, it was my chance
To travel in a country far remote ;
And when these lofty elms once more appeared
What pleasant expectations lured me on 645
O'er the flat Common!—With quick step I
reached

The threshold, lifted with light hand the latch ;
But, when I entered, Margaret looked at me
A little while ; then turned her head away
Speechless,—and, sitting down upon a chair, 650
Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
Nor how to speak to her. Poor Wretch ! at last
She rose from off her seat, and then,—O Sir !
I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name :—
With fervent love, and with a face of grief 655
Unutterably helpless, and a look
That seemed to cling upon me, she enquired
If I had seen her husband. As she spake
A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,
Nor had I power to answer ere she told 660
That he had disappeared—not two months gone.
He left his house : two wretched days had past,
And on the third, as wistfully she raised
Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
Like one in trouble, for returning light, 665
Within her chamber-casement she espied
A folded paper, lying as if placed
To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly
She opened—found no writing, but beheld
Pieces of money carefully enclosed, 670
Silver and gold. ‘I shuddered at the sight,’
Said Margaret, ‘for I knew it was his hand
That must have placed it there ; and ere that
day

Was ended, that long anxious day, I learned,
From one who by my husband had been sent 675

With the sad news, that he had joined a troop
Of soldiers, going to a distant land.

—He left me thus—he could not gather heart
To take a farewell of me; for he feared
That I should follow with my babes, and sink 680
Beneath the misery of that wandering life.'

"This tale did Margaret tell with many tears:
And, when she ended, I had little power
To give her comfort, and was glad to take
Such words of hope from her own mouth as
served 685

To cheer us both. But long we had not talked
Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
And with a brighter eye she looked around
As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
We parted.—'Twas the time of early spring; 690
I left her busy with her garden tools;
And well remember, o'er that fence she looked,
And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
With tender cheerfulness, and with a voice 695
That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.

"I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale,
With my accustomed load; in heat and cold,
Through many a wood and many an open
ground,

In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair, 700
Drooping or blithe of heart, as might befall;
My best companions now the driving winds,
And now the 'trotting brooks' and whispering
trees,

And now the music of my own sad steps,
With many a short-lived thought that passed
between, 705

And disappeared.

I journeyed back this way,
When, in the warmth of midsummer, the wheat
Was yellow; and the soft and bladed grass,
Springing afresh, had o'er the hay-field spread
Its tender verdure. At the door arrived, 710
I found that she was absent. In the shade,
Where now we sit, I waited her return.

Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore
Its customary look,—only, it seemed,
The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch, 715
Hung down in heavier tufts; and that bright
weed,

The yellow stone-crop, suffered to take root
Along the window's edge, profusely grew
Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,
And strolled into her garden. It appeared 720
To lag behind the season, and had lost
Its pride of neatness. Daisy-flowers and thrift
Had broken their trim border-lines, and
straggled

O'er paths they used to deck: carnations, once
Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less 725
For the peculiar pains they had required,
Declined their languid heads, wanting support.
The cumbrous bind-weed, with its wreaths and
bells,

Had twined about her two small rows of peas,
And dragged them to the earth.

Ere this an hour 730
Was wasted.—Back I turned my restless steps;
A stranger passed; and, guessing whom I
sought,

He said that she was used to ramble far.—
The sun was sinking in the west; and now
I sate with sad impatience. From within 735
Her solitary infant cried aloud;

Then, like a blast that dies away self-stilled,
The voice was silent. From the bench I rose ;
But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
The spot, though fair, was very desolate— 740
The longer I remained, more desolate :
And, looking round me, now I first observed
The corner stones, on either side the porch,
With dull red stains discoloured, and stuck
o'er

With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep, 745
That fed upon the Common, thither came
Familiarly, and found a couching-place
Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell
From these tall elms ; the cottage-clock struck
eight ;—

I turned, and saw her distant a few steps. 750
Her face was pale and thin—her figure, too,
Was changed. As she unlocked the door, she
said,

‘It grieves me you have waited here so long,
But, in good truth, I’ve wandered much of
late ;

And, sometimes—to my shame I speak—have
need 755

Of my best prayers to bring me back again.’
While on the board she spread our evening
meal,

She told me—interrupting not the work
Which gave employment to her listless hands—
That she had parted with her elder child ; 760
To a kind master on a distant farm
Now happily apprenticed.—‘I perceive
You look at me, and you have cause ; to-day
I have been travelling far ; and many days
About the fields I wander, knowing this 765
Only, that what I seek I cannot find ;
And so I waste my time : for I am changed ;

And to myself,' said she, 'have done much
wrong

And to this helpless infant. I have slept
Weeping, and weeping have I waked; my
tears 770

Have flowed as if my body were not such
As others are; and I could never die.
But I am now in mind and in my heart
More easy; and I hope,' said she, 'that God
Will give me patience to endure the things 775
Which I behold at home.'

It would have grieved
Your very soul to see her. Sir, I feel
The story linger in my heart; I fear
'Tis long and tedious; but my spirit clings
To that poor Woman:—so familiarly 780

Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
And presence; and so deeply do I feel
Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my walks
A momentary trance comes over me;
And to myself I seem to muse on One 785

By sorrow laid asleep; or borne away,
A human being destined to awake
To human life, or something very near
To human life, when he shall come again
For whom she suffered. Yes, it would have
grieved 790

Your very soul to see her: evermore
Her eyelids drooped, her eyes downward were
cast;

And, when she at her table gave me food,
She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
Her body was subdued. In every act 795
Pertaining to her house-affairs, appeared
The careless stillness of a thinking mind
Self-occupied; to which all outward things
Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,

But yet no motion of the breast was seen, 800
No heaving of the heart. While by the fire
We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

“Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
For her son’s use, some tokens of regard, 805
Which with a look of welcome she received;
And I exhorted her to place her trust
In God’s good love, and seek his help by prayer.
I took my staff, and, when I kissed her babe,
The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then 810
With the best hope and comfort I could give:
She thanked me for my wish;—but for my hope
It seemed she did not thank me.

I returned,
And took my rounds along this road again
When on its sunny bank the primrose flower 815
Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the Spring.
I found her sad and drooping: she had learned
No tidings of her husband; if he lived,
She knew not that he lived; if he were dead,
She knew not he was dead. She seemed the
same 820

In person and appearance; but her house
Bespake a sleepy hand of negligence;
The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
Which, in the cottage-window, heretofore 825
Had been piled up against the corner panes
In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves
Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
As they had chanced to fall. Her infant Babe
Had from its Mother caught the trick of grief, 830
And sighed among its playthings. I withdrew,
And once again entering the garden saw,
More plainly still, that poverty and grief

Were now come nearer to her : weeds defaced
The hardened soil, and knots of withered
grass : 835

No ridges there appeared of clear black mold,
No winter greenness ; of her herbs and flowers,
It seemed the better part were gnawed away
Or trampled into earth ; a chain of straw,
Which had been twined about the slender
stem 840

Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root ;
The bark was nibbled round by truant sheep.
—Margaret stood near, her infant in her arms,
And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
She said, ‘ I fear it will be dead and gone 845
Ere Robert come again.’ When to the House
We had returned together, she enquired
If I had any hope :—but for her babe
And for her little orphan boy, she said,
She had no wish to live, that she must die 850
Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
Still in its place ; his Sunday garments hung
Upon the self-same nail ; his very staff
Stood undisturbed behind the door.

And when,
In bleak December, I retraced this way, 855
She told me that her little babe was dead,
And she was left alone. She now, released
From her maternal cares, had taken up
The employment common through these wilds,
and gained,
By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself ; 860
And for this end had hired a neighbour’s boy
To give her needful help. That very time
Most willingly she put her work aside,
And walked with me along the miry road,
Heedless how far ; and, in such piteous sort 865
That any heart had ached to hear her, begged

That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
For him whom she had lost. We parted then —
Our final parting ; for from that time forth
Did many seasons pass ere I returned 870
Into this tract again.

Nine tedious years ;

From their first separation, nine long years,
She lingered in unquiet widowhood ;
A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have been
A sore heart-wasting ! I have heard, my Friend,
That in yon arbour oftentimes she sate 876
Alone, through half the vacant sabbath day ;
And, if a dog passed by, she still would quit
The shade, and look abroad. On this old bench
For hours she sate ; and evermore her eye 880
Was busy in the distance, shaping things
That made her heart beat quick. You see that
path,
Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its grey
line ;
There, to and fro, she paced through many a day
Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp 885
That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn
thread
With backward steps. Yet ever as there passed
A man whose garments showed the soldier's red,
Or crippled mendicant in sailor's garb,
The little child who sate to turn the wheel 890
Ceased from his task ; and she with faltering
voice

Made many a fond enquiry ; and when they,
Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
That bars the traveller's road, she often stood,
And when a stranger horseman came, the latch
Would lift, and in his face look wistfully : 897
Most happy, if, from aught discovered there

Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
 The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor
 Hut 900
 Sank to decay; for he was gone, whose hand,
 At the first nipping of October frost,
 Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of
 straw
 Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she
 lived
 Through the long winter, reckless and alone; 905
 Until her house by frost, and thaw, and rain,
 Was sapped; and while she slept, the nightly
 damps
 Did chill her breast; and in the stormy day
 Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind,
 Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still 910
 She loved this wretched spot, nor would for
 worlds
 Have parted hence; and still that length of
 road,
 And this rude bench, one torturing hope
 endeared,
 Fast rooted at her heart: and here, my
 Friend,—
 In sickness she remained; and here she died;
 Last human tenant of these ruined walls!" 916

The old Man ceased: he saw that I was
 moved;
 From that low bench, rising instinctively
 I turned aside in weakness, nor had power
 To thank him for the tale which he had told. 920
 I stood, and leaning o'er the garden wall
 Reviewed that Woman's sufferings; and it
 seemed
 To comfort me while with a brother's love
 I blessed her in the impotence of grief.

Then towards the cottage I returned; and
traced 925

Fondly, though with an interest more mild,
That secret spirit of humanity
Which, 'mid the calm oblivious tendencies
Of nature, 'mid her plants, and weeds, and
flowers,

And silent overgrowings, still survived. 930

The old Man, noting this, resumed, and said,
" My Friend ! enough to sorrow you have given,
The purposes of wisdom ask no more :

Nor more would she have craved as due to One
Who, in her worst distress, had oftentimes felt 935
The unbounded might of prayer ; and learned,
with soul

Fixed on the Cross, that consolation springs,
From sources deeper far than deepest pain,
For the meek Sufferer. Why then should we
read

The forms of things with an unworthy eye ? 940
She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.
I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that
wall,

By mist and silent rain-drops silvered o'er,
As once I passed, into my heart conveyed 945
So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my
mind,

That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
That passing shows of Being leave behind, 951
Appeared an idle dream, that could maintain,
Nowhere, dominion o'er the enlightened spirit
Whose meditative sympathies repose
Upon the breast of Faith. I turned away, 955

And walked along my road in happiness.”

He ceased. Ere long the sun declining shot
A slant and mellow radiance, which began
To fall upon us, while, beneath the trees,
We sate on that low bench : and now we felt, 960
Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on.
A linnet warbled from those lofty elms,
A thrush sang loud, and other melodies,
At distance heard, peopled the milder air.
The old Man rose, and, with a sprightly mien
Of hopeful preparation, grasped his staff ; 966
Together casting then a farewell look
Upon those silent walls, we left the shade ;
And, ere the stars were visible, had reached
A village-inn,—our evening resting-place. 970

BOOK SECOND.

THE SOLITARY.

ARGUMENT.

The Author describes his travels with the Wanderer, whose character is further illustrated.—Morning scene, and view of a Village Wake.—Wanderer's account of a Friend whom he purposes to visit.—View, from an eminence, of the Valley which his Friend had chosen for his retreat.—Sound of singing from below.—A funeral procession.—Descent into the Valley.—Observations drawn from the Wanderer at sight of a book accidentally discovered in a recess in the Valley.—Meeting with the Wanderer's friend, the Solitary.—Wanderer's description of the mode of burial in this mountainous district.—Solitary contrasts with this, that of the individual carried a few minutes before from the cottage.—The cottage entered.—Description of the Solitary's apartment.—Repast there.—View, from the window, of two mountain summits; and the Solitary's description of the companionship they afford him.—Account of the departed inmate of the cottage.—Description of a grand spectacle upon the mountains, with its effect upon the Solitary's mind.—Leave the house.

THE SOLITARY.

IN days of yore how fortunately fared
The Minstrel ! wandering on from hall to hall,
Baronial court or royal ; cheered with gifts
Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise ;
Now meeting on his road an armed knight, 5
Now resting with a pilgrim by the side
Of a clear brook ;—beneath an abbey's roof
One evening sumptuously lodged ; the next,
Humbly in a religious hospital ;
Or with some merry outlaws of the wood ; 10
Or haply shrouded in a hermit's cell.
Him, sleeping or awake, the robber spared ;
He walked—protected from the sword of war
By virtue of that sacred instrument
His harp, suspended at the traveller's side ; 15
His dear companion wheresoe'er he went
Opening from land to land an easy way
By melody, and by the charm of verse.
Yet not the noblest of that honoured Race
Drew happier, loftier, more empassioned,
 thoughts 20
From his long journeyings and eventful life,
Than this obscure Itinerant had skill
To gather, ranging through the tamer ground
Of these our unimaginative days ;
Both while he trod the earth in humblest guise
Accoutred with his burthen and his staff ; 26
And now, when free to move with lighter pace.

What wonder, then, if I, whose favourite
school
Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural lanes,
Looked on this guide with reverential love? 30
Each with the other pleased, we now pursued
Our journey, under favourable skies.
Turn wheresoe'er we would, he was a light
Unfailing: not a hamlet could we pass,
Rarely a house, that did not yield to him 35
Remembrances; or from his tongue call forth
Some way-beguiling tale. Nor less regard
Accompanied those strains of apt discourse,
Which nature's various objects might inspire;
And in the silence of his face I read 40
His overflowing spirit. Birds and beasts,
And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
The fowl domestic, and the household dog— 45
In his capacious mind, he loved them all:
Their rights acknowledging he felt for all.
Oft was occasion given me to perceive
How the calm pleasures of the pasturing herd
To happy contemplation soothed his walk; 50
How the poor brute's condition, forced to run
Its course of suffering in the public road,
Sad contrast! all too often smote his heart
With unavailing pity. Rich in love
And sweet humanity, he was, himself, 55
To the degree that he desired, beloved.
Smiles of good-will from faces that he knew
Greeted us all day long; we took our seats
By many a cottage-hearth, where he received
The welcome of an Inmate from afar, 60
And I at once forgot I was a Stranger.
—Nor was he loth to enter ragged huts,
Huts where his charity was blest; his voice

Heard as the voice of an experienced friend.
 And, sometimes—where the poor man held
 dispute 65
 With his own mind, unable to subdue
 Impatience through inaptness to perceive
 General distress in his particular lot;
 Or cherishing resentment, or in vain
 Struggling against it; with a soul perplexed, 70
 And finding in herself no steady power
 To draw the line of comfort that divides
 Calamity, the chastisement of Heaven,
 From the injustice of our brother men—
 To him appeal was made as to a judge; 75
 Who, with an understanding heart, allayed
 The perturbation; listened to the plea;
 Resolved the dubious point; and sentence gave
 So grounded, so applied, that it was heard 79
 With softened spirit, even when it condemned.

Such intercourse I witnessed, while we roved,
 Now as his choice directed, now as mine;
 Or both, with equal readiness of will,
 Our course submitting to the changeful breeze
 Of accident. But when the rising sun 85
 Had three times called us to renew our walk,
 My Fellow-traveller, with earnest voice,
 As if the thought were but a moment old,
 Claimed absolute dominion for the day.
 We started—and he led me toward the hills, 90
 Up through an ample vale, with higher hills
 Before us, mountains stern and desolate;
 But, in the majesty of distance, now
 Set off, and to our ken appearing fair
 Of aspect, with ærial softness clad, 95
 And beautified with morning's purple beams.

The wealthy, the luxurious, by the stress

Of business roused, or pleasure, ere their time,
 May roll in chariots, or provoke the hoofs
 Of the fleet coursers they bestride, to raise 100
 From earth the dust of morning, slow to rise;
 And they, if blest with health and hearts at
 ease,

Shall lack not their enjoyment:—but how faint
 Compared with ours! who, pacing side by side,
 Could, with an eye of leisure, look on all 105
 That we beheld; and lend the listening sense
 To every grateful sound of earth and air;
 Pausing at will—our spirits braced, our
 thoughts

Pleasant as roses in the thickets blown, 109
 And pure as dew bathing their crimson leaves.

Mount slowly, sun! that we may journey
 long,
 By this dark hill protected from thy beams!
 Such is the summer pilgrim's frequent wish;
 But quickly from among our morning thoughts
 'Twas chased away: for, toward the western
 side 115

Of the broad vale, casting a casual glance,
 We saw a throng of people;—wherefore met?
 Blithe notes of music, suddenly let loose
 On the thrilled ear, and flags uprising, yield
 Prompt answer; they proclaim the annual
 Wake, 120

Which the bright season favours.—Tabor and
 pipe

In purpose join to hasten or reprove
 The laggard Rustic; and repay with boons
 Of merriment a party-coloured knot,
 Already formed upon the village-green. 125
 —Beyond the limits of the shadow cast
 By the broad hill, glistened upon our sight

That gay assemblage. Round them and above,
 Glitter, with dark recesses interposed, 129
 Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees
 Half-veiled in vapoury cloud, the silver steam
 Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
 By the strong sunbeams smitten. Like a mast
 Of gold, the Maypole shines; as if the rays
 Of morning, aided by exhaling dew, 135
 With gladsome influence could re-animate
 The faded garlands dangling from its sides.

Said I, "The music and the sprightly scene
 Invite us; shall we quit our road, and join
 These festive matins?"—He replied, "Not loth
 To linger I would here with you partake, 141
 Not one hour merely, but till evening's close,
 The simple pastimes of the day and place.
 By the fleet Racers, ere the sun be set, 144
 The turf of yon large pasture will be skimmed;
 There, too, the lusty Wrestlers shall contend:
 But know we not that he, who intermits
 The appointed task and duties of the day,
 Untunes full oft the pleasures of the day;
 Checking the finer spirits that refuse 150
 To flow, when purposes are lightly changed?
 A length of journey yet remains untraced:
 Let us proceed." Then, pointing with his staff
 Raised toward those craggy summits, his
 intent

He thus imparted:—

"In a spot that lies 155
 Among yon mountain fastnesses concealed,
 You will receive, before the hour of noon,
 Good recompense, I hope, for this day's toil,
 From sight of One who lives secluded there,
 Lonesome and lost: of whom, and whose past
 life, 160

(Not to forestall such knowledge as may be
More faithfully collected from himself)
This brief communication shall suffice.

“ Though now sojourning there, he, like my-
self,
Sprang from a stock of lowly parentage 165
Among the wilds of Scotland, in a tract
Where many a sheltered and well-tended plant
Bears, on the humblest ground of social life,
Blossoms of piety and innocence.
Such grateful promises his youth displayed : 170
And, having shown in study forward zeal,
He to the Ministry was duly called ;
And straight, incited by a curious mind
Filled with vague hopes, he undertook the
charge
Of Chaplain to a military troop 175
Cheered by the Highland bagpipe, as they
marched
In plaided vest,—his fellow-countrymen.
This office filling, yet by native power
And force of native inclination made
An intellectual ruler in the haunts 180
Of social vanity, he walked the world,
Gay, and affecting graceful gaiety ;
Lax, buoyant—less a pastor with his flock
Than a soldier among soldiers—lived and
roamed
Where Fortune led:—and Fortune, who oft
proves 185
The careless wanderer's friend, to him made
known
A blooming Lady—a conspicuous flower,
Admired for beauty, for her sweetness praised ;
Whom he had sensibility to love,
Ambition to attempt, and skill to win. 190

“For this fair Bride, most rich in gifts of
mind,

Nor sparingly endowed with worldly wealth,
His office he relinquished; and retired
From the world's notice to a rural home. 194
Youth's season yet with him was scarcely past,
And she was in youth's prime. How free their
love,

How full their joy! 'Till, pitiable doom!
In the short course of one undreaded year,
Death blasted all. Death suddenly o'erthrew
Two lovely Children—all that they possessed!
The Mother followed:—miserably bare 201
The one Survivor stood; he wept, he prayed
For his dismissal, day and night, compelled
To hold communion with the grave, and face
With pain the regions of eternity. 205

An uncomplaining apathy displaced
This anguish; and, indifferent to delight,
To aim and purpose, he consumed his days,
To private interest dead, and public care.
So lived he; so he might have died.

But now, 210

To the wide world's astonishment, appeared
A glorious opening, the unlooked-for dawn,
That promised everlasting joy to France!
Her voice of social transport reached even him!
He broke from his contracted bounds, repaired
To the great City, an emporium then 216
Of golden expectations, and receiving
Freights every day from a new world of hope.
Thither his popular talents he transferred;
And, from the pulpit, zealously maintained 220
The cause of Christ and civil liberty,
As one, and moving to one glorious end.
Intoxicating service! I might say
A happy service; for he was sincere

As vanity and fondness for applause, 225
And new and shapeless wishes, would allow.

“ That righteous cause (such power hath freedom) bound,
For one hostility, in friendly league,
Ethereal natures and the worst of slaves;
Was served by rival advocates that came 230
From regions opposite as heaven and hell.
One courage seemed to animate them all:
And, from the dazzling conquests daily gained
By their united efforts, there arose
A proud and most presumptuous confidence 235
In the transcendent wisdom of the age,
And her discernment; not alone in rights,
And in the origin and bounds of power
Social and temporal; but in laws divine,
Deduced by reason, or to faith revealed. 240
An overweening trust was raised; and fear
Cast out, alike of person and of thing.
Plague from this union spread, whose subtle
bane
The strongest did not easily escape;
And He, what wonder! took a mortal taint. 245
How shall I trace the change, how bear to tell
That he broke faith with them whom he had
laid
In earth's dark chambers, with a Christian's
hope!
An infidel contempt of holy writ
Stole by degrees upon his mind; and hence 250
Life, like that Roman Janus, double-faced;
Vilest hypocrisy—the laughing, gay
Hypocrisy, not leagued with fear, but pride.
Smooth words he had to wheedle simple souls;
But, for disciples of the inner school, 255
Old freedom was old servitude, and they

The wisest whose opinions stooped the least
 To known restraints; and who most boldly
 drew
 Hopeful prognostications from a creed,
 That, in the light of false philosophy, 260
 Spread like a halo round a misty moon,
 Widening its circle as the storms advance.

“His sacred function was at length renounced;
 And every day and every place enjoyed
 The unshackled layman’s natural liberty; 265
 Speech, manners, morals, all without disguise.
 I do not wish to wrong him; though the course
 Of private life licentiously displayed
 Unhallowed actions—planted like a crown
 Upon the insolent aspiring brow 270
 Of spurious notions—worn as open signs
 Of prejudice subdued—still he retained,
 ’Mid much abasement, what he had received
 From nature, an intense and glowing mind.
 Wherefore, when humbled Liberty grew weak,
 And mortal sickness on her face appeared, 276
 He coloured objects to his own desire
 As with a lover’s passion. Yet his moods
 Of pain were keen as those of better men,
 Nay keener, as his fortitude was less: 280
 And he continued, when worse days were come,
 To deal about his sparkling eloquence,
 Struggling against the strange reverse with zeal
 That showed like happiness. But, in despite
 Of all this outside bravery, within, 285
 He neither felt encouragement nor hope:
 For moral dignity, and strength of mind,
 Were wanting; and simplicity of life;
 And reverence for himself; and, last and best,
 Confiding thoughts, through love and fear of
 Him 290

Before whose sight the troubles of this world
Are vain, as billows in a tossing sea.

“The glory of the times fading away—
The splendour, which had given a festal air
To self-importance, hallowed it, and veiled 295
From his own sight—this gone, he forfeited
All joy in human nature; was consumed,
And vexed, and chafed, by levity and scorn,
And fruitless indignation; galled by pride;
Made desperate by contempt of men who throve
Before his sight in power or fame, and won, 301
Without desert, what he desired; weak men,
Too weak even for his envy or his hate!
Tormented thus, after a wandering course
Of discontent, and inwardly oppress 305
With malady—in part, I fear, provoked
By weariness of life—he fixed his home,
Or, rather say, sate down by very chance,
Among these rugged hills; where now he dwells,
And wastes the sad remainder of his hours, 310
Steeped in a self-indulging spleen, that wants
not
Its own voluptuousness;—on this resolved,
With this content, that he will live and die
Forgotten,—at safe distance from ‘a world
Not moving to his mind.’ ”

These serious words 315
Closed the preparatory notices
That served my Fellow-traveller to beguile
The way, while we advanced up that wide vale.
Diverging now (as if his quest had been
Some secret of the mountains, cavern, fall 320
Of water, or some lofty eminence,
Renowned for splendid prospect far and wide)
We scaled, without a track to ease our steps,
A steep ascent; and reached a dreary plain,

With a tumultuous waste of huge hill tops 325
 Before us; savage region! which I paced
 Dispirited: when, all at once, behold!
 Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale,
 A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high
 Among the mountains; even as if the spot 330
 Had been from eldest time by wish of theirs
 So placed, to be shut out from all the world!
 Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn;
 With rocks encompassed, save that to the south
 Was one small opening, where a heath-clad ridge
 Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close; 336
 A quiet treeless nook, with two green fields,
 A liquid pool that glittered in the sun,
 And one bare dwelling; one abode, no more!
 It seemed the home of poverty and toil, 340
 Though not of want: the little fields, made
 green
 By husbandry of many thrifty years,
 Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland house.
 —There crows the cock, single in his domain:
 The small birds find in spring no thicket there
 To shroud them; only from the neighbouring
 vales 346
 The cuckoo, straggling up to the hill tops,
 Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.

Ah! what a sweet Recess, thought I, is here!
 Instantly throwing down my limbs at ease 350
 Upon a bed of heath;—full many a spot
 Of hidden beauty have I chanced to espy
 Among the mountains; never one like this;
 So lonesome, and so perfectly secure;
 Not melancholy—no, for it is green, 355
 And bright, and fertile, furnished in itself
 With the few needful things that life requires.
 —In rugged arms how softly does it lie,

How tenderly protected! Far and near
 We have an image of the pristine earth, 360
 The planet in its nakedness: were this
 Man's only dwelling, sole appointed seat,
 First, last, and single, in the breathing world,
 It could not be more quiet: peace is here
 Or nowhere; days unruffled by the gale 365
 Of public news or private; years that pass
 Forgetfully; uncalled upon to pay
 The common penalties of mortal life,
 Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain.

On these and kindred thoughts intent I lay
 In silence musing by my Comrade's side, 371
 He also silent; when from out the heart
 Of that profound abyss a solemn voice,
 Or several voices in one solemn sound,
 Was heard ascending; mournful, deep, and slow
 The cadence, as of psalms—a funeral dirge! 376
 We listened, looking down upon the hut,
 But seeing no one: meanwhile from below
 The strain continued, spiritual as before;
 And now distinctly could I recognise 380
 These words:—“*Shall in the grave thy love be
 known,*
In death thy faithfulness?”—“God rest his
 soul!”
 Said the old man, abruptly breaking silence,—
 “He is departed, and finds peace at last!”

This scarcely spoken, and those holy strains
 Not ceasing, forth appeared in view a band 386
 Of rustic persons, from behind the hut
 Bearing a coffin in the midst, with which
 They shaped their course along the sloping side
 Of that small valley, singing as they moved; 390
 A sober company and few, the men

Bare-headed, and all decently attired !
 Some steps when they had thus advanced, the
 dirge
 Ended ; and, from the stillness that ensued 394
 Recovering, to my Friend I said, “ You spake,
 Methought, with apprehension that these rites
 Are paid to Him upon whose shy retreat
 This day we purposed to intrude.”—“ I did so,
 But let us hence, that we may learn the truth :
 Perhaps it is not he but some one else 400
 For whom this pious service is performed ;
 Some other tenant of the solitude.”

So, to a steep and difficult descent
 Trusting ourselves, we wound from crag to
 crag, 404
 Where passage could be won ; and, as the last
 Of the mute train, behind the heathy top
 Of that off-sloping outlet, disappeared,
 I, more impatient in my downward course,
 Had landed upon easy ground ; and there
 Stood waiting for my Comrade. When behold
 An object that enticed my steps aside ! 411
 A narrow, winding, entry opened out
 Into a platform—that lay, sheepfold-wise,
 Enclosed between an upright mass of rock
 And one old moss-grown wall ;—a cool recess,
 And fanciful ! For where the rock and wall 416
 Met in an angle, hung a penthouse, framed
 By thrusting two rude staves into the wall
 And overlaying them with mountain sods ;
 To weather-fend a little turf-built seat 420
 Whereon a full-grown man might rest, nor
 dread
 The burning sunshine, or a transient shower ;
 But the whole plainly wrought by children’s
 hands !

Whose skill had thronged the floor with a proud
show

Of baby-houses, curiously arranged ; 425

Nor wanting ornament of walks between,

With mimic trees inserted in the turf,

And gardens interposed. Pleased with the sight,

I could not choose but beckon to my Guide,

Who, entering, round him threw a careless
glance 430

Impatient to pass on, when I exclaimed,

"Lo ! what is here ?" and, stooping down, drew
forth

A book, that, in the midst of stones and moss

And wreck of party-coloured earthen-ware,

Aptly disposed, had lent its help to raise 435

One of those petty structures. "His it must
be !"

Exclaimed the Wanderer, "cannot but be his,

And he is gone !" The book, which in my hand

Had opened of itself (for it was swoln

With searching damp, and seemingly had lain

To the injurious elements exposed 441

From week to week,) I found to be a work

In the French tongue, a Novel of Voltaire,

His famous Optimist. "Unhappy Man !"

Exclaimed my Friend : "here then has been to
him 445

Retreat within retreat, a sheltering-place

Within how deep a shelter ! He had fits,

Even to the last, of genuine tenderness,

And loved the haunts of children ; here, no
doubt,

Pleasing and pleased, he shared their simple
sports, 450

Or sate companionless ; and here the book,

Left and forgotten in his careless way,

Must by the cottage-children have been found :

Heaven bless them, and their inconsiderate
work !

To what odd purpose have the darlings turned
This sad memorial of their hapless friend !” 456

“ Me,” said I, “ most doth it surprise, to find
Such book in such a place !”—“ A book it is,”
He answered, “ to the Person suited well,
Though little suited to surrounding things : 460
'Tis strange, I grant ; and stranger still had
been

To see the Man who owned it, dwelling here,
With one poor shepherd, far from all the world !—
Now, if our errand hath been thrown away,
As from these intimations I forebode, 465
Grieved shall I be—less for my sake than yours,
And least of all for him who is no more.”

By this, the book was in the old Man's hand ;
And he continued, glancing on the leaves
An eye of scorn :—“ The lover,” said he,
“ doomed 470
To love when hope hath failed him—whom no
depth

Of privacy is deep enough to hide,
Hath yet his bracelet or his lock of hair,
And that is joy to him. When change of times
Hath summoned kings to scaffolds, do but give
The faithful servant, who must hide his head 476
Henceforth in whatsoever nook he may,
A kerchief sprinkled with his master's blood,
And he too hath his comforter. How poor,
Beyond all poverty how destitute, 480
Must that Man have been left, who, hither
driven,

Flying or seeking, could yet bring with him
No dearer relique, and no better stay,

Than this dull product of a scoffer's pen,
 Impure conceits discharging from a heart 485
 Hardened by impious pride!—I did not fear
 To tax you with this journey ;"—mildly said
 My venerable Friend, as forth we stepped
 Into the presence of the cheerful light—
 "For I have knowledge that you do not shrink
 From moving spectacles ;—but let us on." 491

So speaking, on he went, and at the word
 I followed, till he made a sudden stand :
 For full in view, approaching through a gate
 That opened from the enclosure of green fields
 Into the rough uncultivated ground, 496
 Behold the Man whom he had fancied dead !
 I knew from his deportment, mien, and dress,
 That it could be no other ; a pale face,
 A meagre person, tall, and in a garb 500
 Not rustic—dull and faded like himself !
 He saw us not, though distant but few steps ;
 For he was busy, dealing, from a store
 Upon a broad leaf carried, choicest strings
 Of red ripe currants ; gift by which he strove, 505
 With intermixture of endearing words,
 To soothe a Child, who walked beside him,
 weeping
 As if disconsolate.—"They to the grave
 Are bearing him, my Little-one," he said,
 "To the dark pit ; but he will feel no pain ; 510
 His body is at rest, his soul in heaven."

More might have followed—but my honoured
 Friend
 Broke in upon the Speaker with a frank
 And cordial greeting.—Vivid was the light
 That flashed and sparkled from the other's eyes ;
 He was all fire : no shadow on his brow 516

Remained, nor sign of sickness on his face.
 Hands joined he with his Visitant,—a grasp,
 An eager grasp; and many moments' space—
 When the first glow of pleasure was no more, 520
 And, of the sad appearance which at once
 Had vanished, much was come and coming back—
 An amicable smile retained the life
 Which it had unexpectedly received, 524
 Upon his hollow cheek. “How kind,” he said,
 “Nor could your coming have been better timed;
 For this, you see, is in our narrow world
 A day of sorrow. I have here a charge”—
 And, speaking thus, he patted tenderly
 The sun-burnt forehead of the weeping child—
 “A little mourner, whom it is my task 531
 To comfort;—but how came ye?—if yon track
 (Which doth at once befriend us and betray)
 Conducted hither your most welcome feet,
 Ye could not miss the funeral train—they yet 535
 Have scarcely disappeared.” “This blooming
 Child,”

Said the old Man, “is of an age to weep
 At any grave or solemn spectacle,
 Inly distressed or overpowered with awe,
 He knows not wherefore;—but the boy to-day,
 Perhaps is shedding orphan's tears; you also 541
 Must have sustained a loss.”—“The hand of
 Death,”

He answered, “has been here; but could not
 well

Have fallen more lightly, if it had not fallen
 Upon myself.”—The other left these words 545
 Unnoticed, thus continuing.—

“From yon crag,
 Down whose steep sides we dropped into the
 vale,

We heard the hymn they sang—a solemn sound

Heard any where ; but in a place like this
'Tis more than human ! Many precious rites 550
And customs of our rural ancestry
Are gone, or stealing from us ; this, I hope,
Will last for ever. Oft on my way have I
Stood still, though but a casual passenger,
So much I felt the awfulness of life, 555
In that one moment when the corse is lifted
In silence, with a hush of decency ;
Then from the threshold moves with song of
peace,
And confidential yearnings, tow'rd its home,
Its final home on earth. What traveller—
who— 560
(How far soe'er a stranger) does not own
The bond of brotherhood, when he sees them go,
A mute procession on the houseless road ;
Or passing by some single tenement
Or clustered dwellings, where again they raise
The monitory voice ? But most of all 566
It touches, it confirms, and elevates,
Then, when the body, soon to be consigned
Ashes to ashes, dust bequeathed to dust,
Is raised from the church-aisle, and forward
borne 570
Upon the shoulders of the next in love,
The nearest in affection or in blood ;
Yea, by the very mourners who had knelt
Beside the coffin, resting on its lid
In silent grief their unuplifted heads, 575
And heard meanwhile the Psalmist's mournful
plaint,
And that most awful scripture which declares
We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed !
—Have I not seen—ye likewise may have seen—
Son, husband, brothers—brothers side by side,
And son and father also side by side, 581

Rise from that posture :—and in concert move,
 On the green turf following the vested Priest,
 Four dear supporters of one senseless weight,
 From which they do not shrink, and under
 which 585
 They faint not, but advance towards the open
 grave
 Step after step—together, with their firm
 Unhidden faces: he that suffers most,
 He outwardly, and inwardly perhaps, 589
 The most serene, with most undaunted eye!—
 Oh! blest are they who live and die like these,
 Loved with such love, and with such sorrow
 mourned!”

“That poor Man taken hence to-day,” replied
 The Solitary, with a faint sarcastic smile
 Which did not please me, “must be deemed, I
 fear, 595
 Of the unblest; for he will surely sink
 Into his mother earth without such pomp
 Of grief, depart without occasion given
 By him for such array of fortitude.
 Full seventy winters hath he lived, and mark! 600
 This simple Child will mourn his one short hour,
 And I shall miss him; scanty tribute! yet,
 This wanting, he would leave the sight of men,
 If love were his sole claim upon their care,
 Like a ripe date which in the desert falls 605
 Without a hand to gather it.”

At this
 I interposed, though loth to speak, and said,
 “Can it be thus among so small a band
 As ye must needs be here? in such a place
 I would not willingly, methinks, lose sight 610
 Of a departing cloud.”—“’Twas not for love”—
 Answered the sick Man with a careless voice—

“ That I came hither ; neither have I found
Among associates who have power of speech,
Nor in such other converse as is here, 615
Temptation so prevailing as to change
That mood, or undermine my first resolve.”
Then, speaking in like careless sort, he said
To my benign Companion,—“ Pity ’tis
That fortune did not guide you to this house 620
A few days earlier ; then would you have seen
What stuff the Dwellers in a solitude,
That seems by Nature hollowed out to be
The seat and bosom of pure innocence,
Are made of ; an ungracious matter this ! 625
Which, for truth’s sake, yet in remembrance too
Of past discussions with this zealous friend
And advocate of humble life, I now
Will force upon his notice ; undeterred
By the example of his own pure course, 630
And that respect and deference which a soul
May fairly claim, by niggard age enriched
In what she most doth value, love of God
And his frail creature Man ;—but ye shall hear.
I talk—and ye are standing in the sun 635
Without refreshment !”

Quickly had he spoken,
And, with light steps still quicker than his
words,
Led toward the Cottage. Homely was the spot ;
And, to my feeling, ere we reached the door,
Had almost a forbidding nakedness ; 640
Less fair, I grant, even painfully less fair,
Than it appeared when from the beetling rock
We had looked down upon it. All within,
As left by the departed company,
Was silent ; save the solitary clock 645
That on mine ear ticked with a mournful
sound.—

Following our Guide, we clomb the cottage-
stairs

And reached a small apartment dark and low,
Which was no sooner entered than our Host
Said gaily, "This is my domain, my cell, 650
My hermitage, my cabin, what you will—
I love it better than a snail his house.
But now ye shall be feasted with our best."

So, with more ardour than an unripe girl
Left one day mistress of her mother's stores,
He went about his hospitable task. 656
My eyes were busy, and my thoughts no less,
And pleased I looked upon my grey-haired
Friend,

As if to thank him; he returned that look,
Cheered, plainly, and yet serious. What a
wreck 660

Had we about us! scattered was the floor,
And, in like sort, chair, window-seat, and shelf,
With books, maps, fossils, withered plants and
flowers,

And tufts of mountain moss. Mechanic tools
Lay intermixed with scraps of paper, some 665
Scribbled with verse: a broken angling-rod
And shattered telescope, together linked
By cobwebs, stood within a dusty nook;
And instruments of music, some half-made,
Some in disgrace, hung dangling from the
walls. 670

But speedily the promise was fulfilled;
A feast before us, and a courteous Host
Inviting us in glee to sit and eat.
A napkin, white as foam of that rough brook
By which it had been bleached, o'erspread the
board; 675

And was itself half-covered with a store

Of dainties,—oaten bread, curd, cheese, and
cream ;

And cakes of butter curiously embossed,
Butter that had imbibed from meadow-flowers
A golden hue, delicate as their own 680

Faintly reflected in a lingering stream.

Nor lacked, for more delight on that warm day,
Our table, small parade of garden fruits,
And whortle-berries from the mountain side.

The Child, who long ere this had stilled his
sobs, 685

Was now a help to his late comforter,
And moved, a willing Page, as he was bid,
Ministering to our need.

In genial mood,

While at our pastoral banquet thus we sate
Fronting the window of that little cell, 690

I could not, ever and anon, forbear

To glance an upward look on two huge Peaks,
That from some other vale peered into this.

“Those lusty twins,” exclaimed our host, “if
here 694

It were your lot to dwell, would soon become
Your prized companions.—Many are the notes
Which, in his tuneful course, the wind draws
forth

From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dash-
ing shores ;

And well those lofty brethren bear their part
In the wild concert—chiefly when the storm 700

Rides high ; then all the upper air they fill
With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow,

Like smoke, along the level of the blast,
In mighty current ; theirs, too, is the song
Of stream and headlong flood that seldom
fails ; 705

And, in the grim and breathless hour of noon,

Methinks that I have heard them echo back
 The thunder's greeting. Nor have nature's
 laws

Left them ungifted with a power to yield
 Music of finer tone; a harmony, 710
 So do I call it, though it be the hand
 Of silence, though there be no voice;—the
 clouds,

The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
 Motions of moonlight, all come thither—touch,
 And have an answer—thither come, and shape
 A language not unwelcome to sick hearts 716
 And idle spirits:—there the sun himself,
 At the calm close of summer's longest day,
 Rests his substantial orb;—between those
 heights

And on the top of either pinnacle, 720
 More keenly than elsewhere in night's blue
 vault,

Sparkle the stars, as of their station proud.
 Thoughts are not busier in the mind of man
 Than the mute agents stirring there:—alone
 Here do I sit and watch.—”

A fall of voice, 725

Regretted like the nightingale's last note,
 Had scarcely closed this high-wrought strain of
 rapture

Ere with inviting smile the Wanderer said:
 “Now for the tale with which you threatened
 us!”

“In truth the threat escaped me unawares: 730
 Should the tale tire you, let this challenge
 stand

For my excuse. Dissevered from mankind,
 As to your eyes and thoughts we must have
 seemed

When ye looked down upon us from the crag,

Islanders 'mid a stormy mountain sea, 735
We are not so ;—perpetually we touch
Upon the vulgar ordinances of the world ;
And he, whom this our cottage hath to-day
Relinquished, lived dependent for his bread
Upon the laws of public charity. 740
The Housewife, tempted by such slender gains
As might from that occasion be distilled,
Opened, as she before had done for me,
Her doors to admit this homeless Pensioner ;
The portion gave of coarse but wholesome fare
Which appetite required—a blind dull nook,
Such as she had, the *kennel* of his rest ! 747
This, in itself not ill, would yet have been
Ill borne in earlier life ; but his was now
The still contentedness of seventy years. 750
Calm did he sit under the wide-spread tree
Of his old age ; and yet less calm and meek,
Winningly meek or venerably calm,
Than slow and torpid ; paying in this wise
A penalty, if penalty it were, 755
For spendthrift feats, excesses of his prime.
I loved the old Man, for I pitied him !
A task it was, I own, to hold discourse
With one so slow in gathering up his thoughts,
But he was a cheap pleasure to my eyes ; 760
Mild, inoffensive, ready in *his* way,
And helpful to his utmost power : and there
Our housewife knew full well what she
possessed !
He was her vassal of all labour, tilled 764
Her garden, from the pasture fetched her kine ;
And, one among the orderly array
Of hay-makers, beneath the burning sun
Maintained his place ; or heedfully pursued
His course, on errands bound, to other vales,
Leading sometimes an inexperienced child 770

Too young for any profitable task.
So moved he like a shadow that performed
Substantial service. Mark me now, and learn
For what reward!—The moon her monthly
round

Hath not completed since our dame, the queen
Of this one cottage and this lonely dale,
Into my little sanctuary rushed—
Voice to a rueful treble humanised,
And features in deplorable dismay.
I treat the matter lightly, but, alas ! 780
It is most serious : persevering rain
Had fallen in torrents ; all the mountain tops
Where hidden, and black vapours coursed
their sides ;

This had I seen, and saw ; but, till she spake,
Was wholly ignorant that my ancient Friend—
Who at her bidding early and alone, 786
Had clomb aloft to delve the moorland turf
For winter fuel—to his noontide meal
Returned not, and now, haply, on the heights
Lay at the mercy of this raging storm. 790
' Inhuman ! '—said I, ' was an old Man's life
Not worth the trouble of a thought ?—alas !
This notice comes too late.' With joy I saw
Her husband enter—from a distant vale.
We sallied forth together ; found the tools 795
Which the neglected veteran had dropped,
But through all quarters looked for him in vain.
We shouted—but no answer ! Darkness fell
Without remission of the blast or shower, 799
And fears for our own safety drove us home.

“I, who weep little, did, I will confess,
The moment I was seated here alone,
Honour my little cell with some few tears
Which anger and resentment could not dry. 804

All night the storm endured : and, soon as help
Had been collected from the neighbouring vale,
With morning we renewed our quest : the wind
Was fallen, the rain abated, but the hills
Lay shrouded in impenetrable mist ; 809
And long and hopelessly we sought in vain :
'Till, chancing on that lofty ridge to pass
A heap of ruin—almost without walls
And wholly without roof (the bleached remains
Of a small chapel, where, in ancient time,
The peasants of these lonely valleys used 815
To meet for worship on that central height)—
We there espied the object of our search,
Lying full three parts buried among tufts
Of heath-plant, under and above him strewn,
To baffle, as he might, the watery storm : 820
And there we found him breathing peaceably,
Snug as a child that hides itself in sport
'Mid a green hay-cock in a sunny field.
We spake—he made reply, but would not stir
At our entreaty ; less from want of power 825
Than apprehension and bewildering thoughts.

“ So was he lifted gently from the ground,
And with their freight homeward the shepherds
 moved
Through the dull mist, I following—when a
 step,
A single step, that freed me from the skirts 830
Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
Glory beyond all glory ever seen
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul !
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
Was of a mighty city—boldly say 835
A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
Far sinking into splendour—without end !

Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires, 840
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted ; here, serene pavilions bright,
In avenues disposed ; there, towers begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars—illumination of all gems ! 845
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
Upon the dark materials of the storm
Now pacified ; on them, and on the coves
And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
The vapours had receded, taking there 850
Their station under a cerulean sky.
Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight !
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald
turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed, 855
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel and huge,
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped. 860
Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
Of open court, an object like a throne
Under a shining canopy of state
Stood fixed ; and fixed resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use, 865
But vast in size, in substance glorified ;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest power
For admiration and mysterious awe.
This little Vale, a dwelling-place of Man, 870
Lay low beneath my feet ; 'twas visible—
I saw not, but I felt that it was there.
That which I *saw* was the revealed abode
Of Spirits in beatitude : my heart

Swelled in my breast.—‘I have been dead,’ I
 cried, 875
 ‘And now I live! Oh! wherefore *do* I live?’
 And with that pang I prayed to be no more!—
 —But I forget our Charge, as utterly
 I then forgot him:—there I stood and gazed:
 The apparition faded not away, 880
 And I descended.

Having reached the house,
 I found its rescued inmate safely lodged,
 And in serene possession of himself,
 Beside a fire whose genial warmth seemed met
 By a faint shining from the heart, a gleam 885
 Of comfort, spread over his pallid face.
 Great show of joy the housewife made, and truly
 Was glad to find her conscience set at ease;
 And not less glad, for sake of her good name,
 That the poor Sufferer had escaped with life. 890
 But, though he seemed at first to have received
 No harm, and uncomplaining as before
 Went through his usual tasks, a silent change
 Soon showed itself: he lingered three short
 weeks; 894
 And from the cottage hath been borne to-day.

“So ends my dolorous tale, and glad I am
 That it is ended.” At these words he turned—
 And, with blithe air of open fellowship,
 Brought from the cupboard wine and stouter
 cheer,
 Like one who would be merry. Seeing this, 900
 My grey-haired Friend said courteously—“Nay,
 nay,
 You have regaled us as a hermit ought;
 Now let us forth into the sun!”—Our Host
 Rose, though reluctantly, and forth we went.

BOOK THIRD.

DESPONDENCY.

ARGUMENT.

Images in the Valley.—Another Recess in it entered and described.—Wanderer's sensations.—Solitary's excited by the same objects.—Contrast between these.—Despondency of the Solitary gently reproofed.—Conversation exhibiting the Solitary's past and present opinions and feelings, till he enters upon his own History at length.—His domestic felicity.—Afflictions.—Dejection.—Roused by the French Revolution.—Disappointment and disgust.—Voyage to America.—Disappointment and disgust pursue him.—His return.—His languor and depression of mind, from want of faith in the great truths of Religion, and want of confidence in the virtue of Mankind.

DESPONDENCY.

A HUMMING BEE—a little tinkling rill—
A pair of falcons wheeling on the wing,
In clamorous agitation, round the crest
Of a tall rock, their airy citadel—
By each and all of these the pensive ear 5
Was greeted, in the silence that ensued,
When through the cottage-threshold we had
 passed,
And, deep within that lonesome valley, stood
Once more beneath the conclave of a blue
And cloudless sky.—Anon exclaimed our Host,
Triumphantly dispersing with the taunt 11
The shade of discontent which on his brow
Had gathered,—“ Ye have left my cell,—but
 see
How Nature hems you in with friendly arms!
And by her help ye are my prisoners still. 15
But which way shall I lead you?—how contrive,
In spot so parsimoniously endowed,
That the brief hours, which yet remain, may
 reap
Some recompense of knowledge or delight?”
So saying, round he looked, as if perplexed; 20
And, to remove those doubts, my grey-haired
 Friend
Said—“ Shall we take this pathway for our
 guide?—

Upward it winds, as if, in summer heats,
Its line had first been fashioned by the flock
Seeking a place of refuge at the root 25
Of yon black Yew-tree, whose protruded boughs
Darken the silver bosom of the crag,
From which she draws her meagre sustenance.
There in commodious shelter may we rest.
Or let us trace this streamlet to its source; 30
Feebly it tinkles with an earthy sound,
And a few steps may bring us to the spot
Where, haply, crowned with flowerets and green
herbs,
The mountain infant to the sun comes forth,
Like human life from darkness."—A quick
turn 35
Through a strait passage of encumbered ground,
Proved that such hope was vain:—for now we
stood
Shut out from prospect of the open vale,
And saw the water, that composed this rill,
Descending, disembodied, and diffused 40
O'er the smooth surface of an ample crag,
Lofty, and steep, and naked as a tower.
All further progress here was barred;—And
who,
Thought I, if master of a vacant hour,
Here would not linger, willingly detained? 45
Whether to such wild objects he were led
When copious rains have magnified the stream
Into a loud and white-robed waterfall,
Or introduced at this more quiet time.

Upon a semicirque of turf-clad ground, 50
The hidden nook discovered to our view
A mass of rock, resembling, as it lay
Right at the foot of that moist precipice,
A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that rests

Fearless of winds and waves. Three several
stones

55

Stood near, of smaller size, and not unlike
To monumental pillars: and, from these
Some little space disjoined, a pair were seen,
That with united shoulders bore aloft
A fragment, like an altar, flat and smooth: 60
Barren the tablet, yet thereon appeared
A tall and shining holly, that had found
A hospitable chink, and stood upright,
As if inserted by some human hand
In mockery, to wither in the sun, 65
Or lay its beauty flat before a breeze,
The first that entered. But no breeze did now
Find entrance;—high or low appeared no trace
Of motion, save the water that descended,
Diffused adown that barrier of steep rock, 70
And softly creeping, like a breath of air,
Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly seen,
To brush the still breast of a crystal lake.

“Behold a cabinet for sages built,
Which kings might envy!”—Praise to this
effect

75

Broke from the happy old Man’s reverend lip;
Who to the Solitary turned, and said,
“In sooth, with love’s familiar privilege,
You have decried the wealth which is your own.
Among these rocks and stones, methinks, I see
More than the heedless impress that belongs 81
To lonely nature’s casual work: they bear
A semblance strange of power intelligent,
And of design not wholly worn away.
Boldest of plants that ever faced the wind, 85
How gracefully that slender shrub looks forth
From its fantastic birth-place! And I own,
Some shadowy intimations haunt me here,

That in these shows a chronicle survives
 Of purposes akin to those of Man, 90
 But wrought with mightier arm than now
 prevails.

—Voiceless the stream descends into the gulf
 With timid lapse ;—and lo ! while in this strait
 I stand—the chasm of sky above my head
 Is heaven's profoundest azure ; no domain 95
 For fickle, short-lived clouds to occupy,
 Or to pass through ; but rather an abyss
 In which the everlasting stars abide ;
 And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth,
 might tempt

The curious eye to look for them by day. 100

—Hail Contemplation ! from the stately towers,
 Reared by the industrious hand of human art
 To lift thee high above the misty air
 And turbulence of murmuring cities vast ;
 From academic groves, that have for thee 105
 Been planted, hither come and find a lodge
 To which thou mayst resort for holier peace,—
 From whose calm centre thou, through height
 or depth,

Mayst penetrate, wherever truth shall lead ;
 Measuring through all degrees, until the scale
 Of time and conscious nature disappear, 111
 Lost in unsearchable eternity !”

A pause ensued ; and with minuter care
 We scanned the various features of the scene :
 And soon the Tenant of that lonely vale 115
 With courteous voice thus spake—

“I should have grieved
 Hereafter, not escaping self-reproach,
 If from my poor retirement ye had gone
 Leaving this nook unvisited : but, in sooth,
 Your unexpected presence had so roused 120

My spirits, that they were bent on enterprise ;
And, like an ardent hunter, I forgot,
Or, shall I say ?—disdained, the game that
 lurks

At my own door. The shapes before our eyes
And their arrangement, doubtless must be
deemed

The sport of Nature, aided by blind Chance
Rudely to mock the works of toiling Man.
And hence, this upright shaft of unhewn stone,
From Fancy, willing to set off her stores
By sounding titles, hath acquired the name 130

Of Pompey's pillar; that I gravely style
My Theban obelisk; and, there, behold
A Druid cromlech!—thus I entertain
The antiquarian humour, and am pleased
To skim along the surfaces of things,
Beguiling harmlessly the listless hours.

But if the spirit be oppressed by sense
Of instability, revolt, decay,
And change, and emptiness, these freaks of
Nature

And her blind helper Chance, do *then* suffice 140
To quicken, and to aggravate—to feed
Pity and scorn, and melancholy pride,
Not less than that huge Pile (from some
abyss

Of mortal power unquestionably sprung)
Whose hoary diadem of pendent rocks 145
Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind, round and
round

Eddying within its vast circumference,
On Sarum's naked plain—than pyramid
Of Egypt, unsubverted, undissolved—
Or Syria's marble ruins towering high
Above the sandy desert, in the light
Of sun or moon.—Forgive me, if I say

That an appearance which hath raised your
minds

To an exalted pitch (the self-same cause
Different effect producing) is for me 155

Fraught rather with depression than delight,
Though shame it were, could I not look around,
By the reflection of your pleasure, pleased.
Yet happier in my judgment, even than you
With your bright transports fairly may be
deemed, 160

The wandering Herbalist,—who, clear alike
From vain, and, that worse evil, vexing
thoughts,

Casts, if he ever chance to enter here,
Upon these uncouth Forms a slight regard
Of transitory interest, and peeps round 165

For some rare floweret of the hills, or plant
Of craggy fountain; what he hopes for wins,
Or learns, at least, that 'tis not to be won :
Then, keen and eager, as a fine-nosed hound
By soul-engrossing instinct driven along 170

Through wood or open field, the harmless Man
Departs, intent upon his onward quest!—
Nor is that Fellow-wanderer, so deem I,
Less to be envied, (you may trace him oft
By scars which his activity has left 175
Beside our roads and pathways, though, thank
Heaven !

This covert nook reports not of his hand)
He who with pocket-hammer smites the edge
Of luckless rock or prominent stone, disguised
In weather-stains or crusted o'er by Nature 180
With her first growths, detaching by the stroke
A chip or splinter—to resolve his doubts ;
And, with that ready answer satisfied,
The substance classes by some barbarous name,
And hurries on ; or from the fragments picks 185

His specimen, if but haply interveined
 With sparkling mineral, or should crystal cube
 Lurk in its cells—and thinks himself enriched,
 Wealthier, and doubtless wiser, than before!
 Intrusted safely each to his pursuit, 190
 Earnest alike, let both from hill to hill
 Range; if it please them, speed from clime to
 clime;
 The mind is full—and free from pain their
 pastime.”

“Then,” said I, interposing, “One is near,
 Who cannot but possess in your esteem 195
 Place worthier still of envy. May I name,
 Without offence, that fair-faced cottage-boy?
 Dame Nature’s pupil of the lowest form,
 Youngest apprentice in the school of art!
 Him, as we entered from the open glen, 200
 You might have noticed, busily engaged,
 Heart, soul, and hands,—in mending the defects
 Left in the fabric of a leaky dam
 Raised for enabling this penurious stream
 To turn a slender mill (that new-made play-
 thing) 205
 For his delight—the happiest he of all!”

“Far happiest,” answered the desponding
 Man,
 “If, such as now he is, he might remain!
 Ah! what avails imagination high
 Or question deep? what profits all that earth, 210
 Or heaven’s blue vault, is suffered to put forth
 Of impulse or allurements, for the Soul
 To quit the beaten track of life, and soar
 Far as she finds a yielding element
 In past or future; far as she can go 215
 Through time or space—if neither in the one,

Nor in the other region, nor in aught
 That Fancy, dreaming o'er the map of things,
 Hath placed beyond these penetrable bounds,
 Words of assurance can be heard; if nowhere
 A habitation, for consummate good, 221
 Or for progressive virtue, by the search
 Can be attained,—a better sanctuary
 From doubt and sorrow, than the senseless
 grave?"

"Is this," the grey-haired Wanderer mildly
 said, 225
 "The voice, which we so lately overheard,
 To that same child, addressing tenderly
 The consolations of a hopeful mind?
 '*His body is at rest, his soul in heaven.*'
 These were your words; and, verily, methinks
 Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop 231
 Than when we soar."—

The Other, not displeased,
 Promptly replied—"My notion is the same.
 And I, without reluctance, could decline
 All act of inquisition whence we rise, 235
 And what, when breath hath ceased, we may
 become.

Here are we, in a bright and breathing world.
 Our origin, what matters it? In lack
 Of worthier explanation, say at once
 With the American (a thought which suits 240
 The place where now we stand) that certain men
 Leapt out together from a rocky cave;
 And these were the first parents of mankind:
 Or, if a different image be recalled
 By the warm sunshine, and the jocund voice
 Of insects chirping out their careless lives 246
 On these soft beds of thyme-besprinkled turf,
 Choose, with the gay Athenian, a conceit

As sound—blithe race! whose mantles were
bedecked

With golden grasshoppers, in sign that they 250
Had sprung, like those bright creatures, from
the soil

Whereon their endless generations dwelt.

But stop!—these theoretic fancies jar

On serious minds: then, as the Hindoos draw
Their holy Ganges from a skiey fount, 255
Even so deduce the stream of human life

From seats of power divine; and hope, or trust,
That our existence winds her stately course
Beneath the sun, like Ganges, to make part
Of a living ocean; or, to sink engulfed, 260
Like Niger, in impenetrable sands

And utter darkness: thought which may be
faced,

Though comfortless!—

Not of myself I speak;

Such acquiescence neither doth imply,
In me, a meekly-bending spirit soothed 265

By natural piety; nor a lofty mind,

By philosophic discipline prepared

For calm subjection to acknowledged law;

Pleased to have been, contented not to be.

Such palms I boast not;—no! to me, who find,
Reviewing my past way, much to condemn, 271

Little to praise, and nothing to regret,

(Save some remembrances of dream-like joys
That scarcely seem to have belonged to me)

If I must take my choice between the pair 275

That rule alternately the weary hours,

Night is than day more acceptable; sleep

Doth, in my estimate of good, appear

A better state than waking; death than sleep:
Feelingly sweet is stillness after storm, 280

Though under covert of the wormy ground!

“ Yet be it said, in justice to myself,
 That in more genial times, when I was free
 To explore the destiny of human kind
 (Not as an intellectual game pursued 285
 With curious subtilty, from wish to cheat
 Irksome sensations; but by love of truth
 Urged on, or haply by intense delight
 In feeding thought, wherever thought could
 feed)

I did not rank with those (too dull or nice, 290
 For to my judgment such they then appeared,
 Or too aspiring, thankless at the best)
 Who, in this frame of human life, perceive
 An object whereunto their souls are tied
 In discontented wedlock; nor did e'er, 295
 From me, those dark impervious shades, that
 hang

Upon the region whither we are bound,
 Exclude a power to enjoy the vital beams
 Of present sunshine.—Deities that float
 On wings, angelic Spirits! I could muse 300
 O'er what from eldest time we have been told
 Of your bright forms and glorious faculties,
 And with the imagination rest content,
 Not wishing more; repining not to tread
 The little sinuous path of earthly care, 305
 By flowers embellished, and by springs re-
 freshed.

—‘ Blow winds of autumn!—let your chilling
 breath

Take the live herbage from the mead, and strip
 The shady forest of its green attire,—
 And let the bursting clouds to fury rouse 310
 The gentle brooks!—Your desolating sway,
 Sheds,’ I exclaimed, ‘ no sadness upon me,
 And no disorder in your rage I find.
 What dignity, what beauty, in this change

From mild to angry, and from sad to gay, 315
 Alternate and revolving ! How benign,
 How rich in animation and delight,
 How bountiful these elements—compared
 With aught, as more desirable and fair,
 Devised by fancy for the golden age ; 320
 Or the perpetual warbling that prevails
 In Arcady, beneath unaltered skies,
 Through the long year in constant quiet bound,
 Night hushed as night, and day serene as day !
 —But why this tedious record ?—Age, we
 know, 325
 Is garrulous ; and solitude is apt
 To anticipate the privilege of Age.
 From far ye come ; and surely with a hope
 Of better entertainment :—let us hence ! ”

Loth to forsake the spot, and still more
 loth 330
 To be diverted from our present theme,
 I said, “ My thoughts, agreeing, Sir, with yours,
 Would push this censure farther ;—for, if smiles
 Of scornful pity be the just reward
 Of Poesy thus courteously employed 335
 In framing models to improve the scheme
 Of Man’s existence, and recast the world,
 Why should not grave Philosophy be styled,
 Herself, a dreamer of a kindred stock,
 A dreamer yet more spiritless and dull ? 340
 Yes, shall the fine immunities she boasts
 Establish sounder titles of esteem
 For her, who (all too timid and reserved
 For onset, for resistance too inert,
 Too weak for suffering, and for hope too
 tame) 345
 Placed, among flowery gardens curtained round
 With world-excluding groves, the brotherhood

Of soft Epicureans, taught—if they
The ends of being would secure, and win
The crown of wisdom—to yield up their souls 350
To a voluptuous unconcern, preferring
Tranquillity to all things. Or is she,”
I cried, “more worthy of regard, the Power,
Who, for the sake of sterner quiet, closed
The Stoic’s heart against the vain approach 355
Of admiration, and all sense of joy?”

His countenance gave notice that my zeal
 Accorded little with his present mind ;
 I ceased, and he resumed.—“ Ah ! gentle Sir,
 Slight, if you will, the *means* ; but spare to
 slight 360
 The *end* of those, who did, by system, rank,
 As the prime object of a wise man’s aim,
 Security from shock of accident,
 Released from fear ; and cherished peaceful
 days
 For their own sakes, as mortal life’s chief
 good, 365
 And only reasonable felicity.
 What motive drew, what impulse, I would
 ask,
 Through a long course of later ages, drove,
 The hermit to his cell in forest wide ;
 Or what detained him, till his closing eyes 370
 Took their last farewell of the sun and stars,
 Fast anchored in the desert ?—Not alone
 Dread of the persecuting sword, remorse,
 Wrongs unredressed, or insults unavenged
 And unavengeable, defeated pride, 375
 Prosperity subverted, maddening want,
 Friendship betrayed, affection unreturned,
 Love with despair, or grief in agony ;—
 Not always from intolerable pangs

He fled ; but, compassed round by pleasure,
 sighed 380
 For independent happiness ; craving peace,
 The central feeling of all happiness,
 Not as a refuge from distress or pain,
 A breathing-time, vacation, or a truce,
 But for its absolute self ; a life of peace, 385
 Stability without regret or fear ;
 That hath been, is, and shall be evermore !—
 Such the reward he sought ; and wore out life,
 There, where on few external things his heart
 Was set, and those his own ; or, if not his, 390
 Subsisting under nature's stedfast law.

"What other yearning was the master tie
 Of the monastic brotherhood, upon rock
 Aërial, or in green secluded vale,
 One after one, collected from afar, 395
 An undissolving fellowship?—What but this,
 The universal instinct of repose,
 The longing for confirmed tranquillity,
 Inward and outward; humble, yet sublime :
 The life where hope and memory are as one; 400
 Where earth is quiet and her face unchanged
 Save by the simplest toil of human hands
 Or season's difference; the immortal Soul
 Consistent in self-rule; and heaven revealed
 To meditation in that quietness!— 405
 Such was their scheme: and though the wished
 for end
 By multitudes was missed, perhaps attained
 By none, they for the attempt, and pains
 employed,
 Do, in my present censure, stand redeemed
 From the unqualified disdain, that once 410
 Would have been cast upon them by my voice
 Delivering her decisions from the seat

Of forward youth—that scruples not to solve
 Doubts, and determine questions, by the rules
 Of inexperienced judgment, ever prone 415
 To overweening faith; and is inflamed,
 By courage, to demand from real life
 The test of act and suffering, to provoke
 Hostility—how dreadful when it comes,
 Whether affliction be the foe, or guilt! 420

“A child of earth, I rested, in that stage
 Of my past course to which these thoughts
 advert,

Upon earth's native energies; forgetting
 That mine was a condition which required
 Nor energy, nor fortitude—a calm 425
 Without vicissitude; which, if the like
 Had been presented to my view elsewhere,
 I might have even been tempted to despise.
 But no—for the serene was also bright;
 Enlivened happiness with joy o'erflowing, 430
 With joy, and—oh! that memory should
 survive

To speak the word—with rapture! Nature's
 boon,

Life's genuine inspiration, happiness
 Above what rules can teach, or fancy feign;
 Abused, as all possessions *are* abused 435
 That are not prized according to their worth.
 And yet, what worth? what good is given to
 men,

More solid than the gilded clouds of heaven?
 What joy more lasting than a vernal flower?—
 None! 'tis the general plaint of human kind 440
 In solitude: and mutually addressed
 From each to all, for wisdom's sake:—This
 truth

The priest announces from his holy seat:

And, crowned with garlands in the summer
grove,

The poet fits it to his pensive lyre. 445

Yet, ere that final resting-place be gained,
Sharp contradictions may arise, by doom
Of this same life, compelling us to grieve
That the prosperities of love and joy
Should be permitted, oft-times, to endure 450
So long, and be at once cast down for ever.

Oh ! tremble, ye, to whom hath been assigned
A course of days composing happy months,
And they as happy years ; the present still
So like the past, and both so firm a pledge 455

Of a congenial future, that the wheels
Of pleasure move without the aid of hope :
For Mutability is Nature's bane ;
And slighted Hope *will* be avenged ; and, when
Ye need her favours, ye shall find her not ; 460
But in her stead—fear—doubt—and agony !”

This was the bitter language of the heart :
But, while he spake, look, gesture, tone of voice,
Though discomposed and vehement, were such
As skill and graceful nature might suggest 465
To a proficient of the tragic scene
Standing before the multitude, beset
With dark events. Desirous to divert
Or stem the current of the speaker's thoughts,
We signified a wish to leave that place 470
Of stillness and close privacy, a nook
That seemed for self-examination made ;
Or, for confession, in the sinner's need,
Hidden from all men's view. To our attempt
He yielded not ; but, pointing to a slope 475
Of mossy turf defended from the sun,
And on that couch inviting us to rest,
Full on that tender-hearted Man he turned

A serious eye, and his speech thus renewed.

“ You never saw, your eyes did never look 480
On the bright form of Her whom once I loved:—
Her silver voice was heard upon the earth,
A sound unknown to you; else, honoured
Friend!

Your heart had borne a pitiable share
Of what I suffered, when I wept that loss, 485
And suffer now, not seldom, from the thought
That I remember, and can weep no more.—
Stripped as I am of all the golden fruit
Of self-esteem; and by the cutting blasts
Of self-reproach familiarly assailed; 490
Yet would I not be of such wintry bareness
But that some leaf of your regard should hang
Upon my naked branches:—lively thoughts
Give birth, full often, to unguarded words;
I grieve that, in your presence, from my
tongue 495
Too much of frailty hath already dropped;
But that too much demands still more.

You know,

Revered Compatriot—and to you, kind Sir,
(Not to be deemed a stranger, as you come
Following the guidance of these welcome feet 500
To our secluded vale) it may be told—
That my demerits did not sue in vain
To One on whose mild radiance many gazed
With hope, and all with pleasure. This fair
Bride—

In the devotedness of youthful love, 505
Preferring me to parents, and the choir
Of gay companions, to the natal roof,
And all known places and familiar sights
(Resigned with sadness gently weighing down
Her trembling expectations, but no more 510

Than did to her due honour, and to me
 Yielded, that day, a confidence sublime
 In what I had to build upon)—this Bride,
 Young, modest, meek, and beautiful, I led
 To a low cottage in a sunny bay, 515
 Where the salt sea innocuously breaks,
 And the sea breeze as innocently breathes,
 On Devon's leafy shores ;—a sheltered hold,
 In a soft clime encouraging the soil
 To a luxuriant bounty !—As our steps 520
 Approach the embowered abode—our chosen
 seat—

See, rooted in the earth, her kindly bed,
 The unendangered myrtle, decked with flowers,
 Before the threshold stands to welcome us !
 While, in the flowering myrtle's neighbour-
 hood, 525

Not overlooked but courting no regard,
 Those native plants, the holly and the yew,
 Gave modest intimation to the mind
 How willingly their aid they would unite
 With the green myrtle, to endear the hours 530
 Of winter, and protect that pleasant place.
 —Wild were the walks upon those lonely
 Downs,

Track leading into track ; how marked, how
 worn

Into bright verdure, between fern and gorse,
 Winding away its never ending line 535
 On their smooth surface, evidence was none :
 But, there, lay open to our daily haunt,
 A range of unappropriated earth,
 Where youth's ambitious feet might move at
 large ;

Whence, unmolested wanderers, we beheld 540
 The shining giver of the day diffuse
 His brightness o'er a tract of sea and land

Gay as our spirits, free as our desires ;
 As our enjoyments, boundless.—From those
 heights
 We dropped, at pleasure, into sylvan combs ; 545
 Where harbours of impenetrable shade,
 And mossy seats, detained us side by side,
 With hearts at ease, and knowledge in our
 hearts
 ‘ That all the grove and all the day was ours.’

“ O happy time ! still happier was at hand ; 550
 For Nature called my Partner to resign
 Her share in the pure freedom of that life,
 Enjoyed by us in common.—To my hope,
 To my heart’s wish, my tender Mate became
 The thankful captive of maternal bonds ; 555
 And those wild paths were left to me alone.
 There could I meditate on follies past ;
 And, like a weary voyager escaped
 From risk and hardship, inwardly retrace
 A course of vain delights and thoughtless
 guilt, 560
 And self-indulgence—without shame pursued.
 There, undisturbed, could think of and could
 thank
 Her whose submissive spirit was to me
 Rule and restraint—my guardian—shall I say
 That earthly Providence, whose guiding love 565
 Within a port of rest had lodged me safe ;
 Safe from temptation, and from danger far ?
 Strains followed of acknowledgment addressed
 To an Authority enthroned above
 The reach of sight ; from whom, as from their
 source, 570
 Proceed all visible ministers of good
 That walk the earth—Father of heaven and
 earth,

Father, and king, and judge, adored and feared !
 These acts of mind, and memory, and heart,
 And spirit—interrupted and relieved 575
 By observations transient as the glance
 Of flying sunbeams, or to the outward form
 Cleaving with power inherent and intense,
 As the mute insect fixed upon the plant
 On whose soft leaves it hangs, and from whose
 cup 580
 It draws its nourishment imperceptibly—
 Endeared my wanderings ; and the mother's
 kiss
 And infant's smile awaited my return.

“ In privacy we dwelt, a wedded pair,
 Companions daily, often all day long ; 585
 Not placed by fortune within easy reach
 Of various intercourse, nor wishing aught
 Beyond the allowance of our own fire-side,
 The twain within our happy cottage born,
 Inmates, and heirs of our united love ; 590
 Graced mutually by difference of sex,
 And with no wider interval of time
 Between their several births than served for one
 To establish something of a leader's sway ;
 Yet left them joined by sympathy in age ; 595
 Equals in pleasure, fellows in pursuit.
 On these two pillars rested as in air
 Our solitude.

It soothes me to perceive,
 Your courtesy withholds not from my words
 Attentive audience. But, oh ! gentle Friends,
 As times of quiet and unbroken peace, 601
 Though, for a nation, times of blessedness,
 Give back faint echoes from the historian's
 page ;
 So, in the imperfect sounds of this discourse,

Depressed I hear, how faithless is the voice 605
 Which those most blissful days reverberate.
 What special record can, or need, be given
 To rules and habits, whereby much was done,
 But all within the sphere of little things ;
 Of humble, though, to us, important cares, 610
 And precious interests? Smoothly did our life
 Advance, swerving not from the path pre-
 scribed ;
 Her annual, her diurnal, round alike
 Maintained with faithful care. And you divine
 The worst effects that our condition saw 615
 If you imagine changes slowly wrought,
 And in their process unperceivable ;
 Not wished for ; sometimes noticed with a sigh,
 (Whate'er of good or lovely they might bring)
 Sighs of regret, for the familiar good 620
 And loveliness endeared which they removed.

“Seven years of occupation undisturbed
 Established seemingly a right to hold
 That happiness ; and use and habit gave
 To what an alien spirit had acquired 625
 A patrimonial sanctity. And thus,
 With thoughts and wishes bounded to this
 world,
 I lived and breathed ; most grateful—if to
 enjoy
 Without repining or desire for more,
 For different lot, or change to higher sphere,
 (Only except some impulses of pride 631
 With no determined object, though upheld
 By theories with suitable support)—
 Most grateful, if in such wise to enjoy
 Be proof of gratitude for what we have ; 635
 Else, I allow, most thankless.—But, at once,
 From some dark seat of fatal power was urged

A claim that shattered all.—Our blooming girl,
Caught in the gripe of death, with such brief
time

To struggle in as scarcely would allow 640
Her cheek to change its colour, was conveyed
From us to inaccessible worlds, to regions
Where height, or depth, admits not the ap-
proach

Of living man, though longing to pursue. 644
—With even as brief a warning—and how soon,
With what short interval of time between,
I tremble yet to think of—our last prop,
Our happy life's only remaining stay—
The brother followed; and was seen no more!

“Calm as a frozen lake when ruthless winds
Blow fiercely, agitating earth and sky, 651
The Mother now remained; as if in her,
Who, to the lowest region of the soul,
Had been erewhile unsettled and disturbed,
This second visitation had no power 655
To shake; but only to bind up and seal;
And to establish thankfulness of heart
In Heaven's determinations, ever just.
The eminence whereon her spirit stood,
Mine was unable to attain. Immense 660
The space that severed us! But, as the sight
Communicates with heaven's ethereal orbs
Incalculably distant; so, I felt
That consolation may descend from far
(And that is intercourse, and union, too,) 665
While, overcome with speechless gratitude,
And, with a holier love inspired, I looked
On her—at once superior to my woes
And partner of my loss.—O heavy change!
Dimness o'er this clear luminary crept 670
Insensibly;—the immortal and divine

Yielded to mortal reflux ; her pure glory,
 As from the pinnacle of worldly state
 Wretched ambition drops astounded, fell
 Into a gulf obscure of silent grief, 675
 And keen heart-anguish—of itself ashamed,
 Yet obstinately cherishing itself :
 And, so consumed, she melted from my arms ;
 And left me, on this earth, disconsolate !

“ What followed cannot be reviewed in
 thought ; 680
 Much less, retraced in words. If she, of
 life

Blameless, so intimate with love and joy
 And all the tender motions of the soul,
 Had been supplanted, could I hope to stand—
 Infirm, dependent, and now destitute ? 685
 I called on dreams and visions, to disclose
 That which is veiled from waking thought ;
 conjured

Eternity, as men constrain a ghost
 To appear and answer ; to the grave I spake
 Imploringly ;—looked up, and asked the
 Heavens 690

If Angels traversed their cerulean floors,
 If fixed or wandering star could tidings yield
 Of the departed spirit—what abode
 It occupies—what consciousness retains 694
 Of former loves and interests. Then my soul
 Turned inward,—to examine of what stuff
 Time's fetters are composed ; and life was put
 To inquisition, long and profitless !
 By pain of heart—now checked—and now im-
 pelled—

The intellectual power, through words and
 things, 700
 Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way !

And from those transports, and these toils
 abstruse,
 Some trace am I enabled to retain
 Of time, else lost;—existing unto me
 Only by records in myself not found. 705

“From that abstraction I was roused,—and
 how?

Even as a thoughtful shepherd by a flash
 Of lightning startled in a gloomy cave
 Of these wild hills. For, lo! the dread Bastile,
 With all the chambers in its horrid towers, 710
 Fell to the ground:—by violence overthrown
 Of indignation; and with shouts that drowned
 The crash it made in falling! From the wreck
 A golden palace rose, or seemed to rise,
 The appointed seat of equitable law 715
 And mild paternal sway. The potent shock
 I felt: the transformation I perceived,
 As marvellously seized as in that moment
 When, from the blind mist issuing, I beheld
 Glory—beyond all glory ever seen, 720
 Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,
 Dazzling the soul. Meanwhile, prophetic harps
 In every grove were ringing, ‘War shall cease;
 Did ye not hear that conquest is abjured?
 Bring garlands, bring forth choicest flowers, to
 deck 725
 The tree of Liberty.’—My heart rebounded;
 My melancholy voice the chorus joined;
 —‘Be joyful all ye nations; in all lands,
 Ye that are capable of joy be glad!
 Henceforth, whate’er is wanting to yourselves
 In others ye shall promptly find;—and all, 731
 Enriched by mutual and reflected wealth,
 Shall with one heart honour their common
 kind.’

“ Thus was I reconverted to the world ;
Society became my glittering bride, 735
And airy hopes my children.—From the depths
Of natural passion, seemingly escaped,
My soul diffused herself in wide embrace
Of institutions, and the forms of things ;
As they exist, in mutable array, 740
Upon life's surface. What, though in my veins
There flowed no Gallic blood, nor had I breathed
The air of France, not less than Gallic zeal
Kindled and burnt among the sapless twigs
Of my exhausted heart. If busy men 745
In sober conclave met, to weave a web
Of amity, whose living threads should stretch
Beyond the seas, and to the farthest pole,
There did I sit, assisting. If, with noise
And acclamation, crowds in open air 750
Expressed the tumult of their minds, my voice
There mingled, heard or not. The powers of
song

I left not uninvoked ; and, in still groves,
Where mild enthusiasts tuned a pensive lay
Of thanks and expectation, in accord 755
With their belief, I sang Saturnian rule
Returned,—a progeny of golden years
Permitted to descend, and bless mankind.
—With promises the Hebrew Scriptures teem :
I felt their invitation ; and resumed 760
A long-suspended office in the House
Of public worship, where, the glowing phrase
Of ancient inspiration serving me,
I promised also,—with undaunted trust
Foretold, and added prayer to prophecy ; 765
The admiration winning of the crowd ;
The help desiring of the pure devout.

“ Scorn and contempt forbid me to proceed !

But History, time's slavish scribe, will tell
 How rapidly the zealots of the cause 770
 Disbanded—or in hostile ranks appeared ;
 Some, tired of honest service ; these, outdone,
 Disgusted therefore, or appalled, by aims
 Of fiercer zealots—so confusion reigned,
 And the more faithful were compelled to ex-
 claim, 775
 As Brutus did to Virtue, ' Liberty,
 I worshipped thee, and find thee but a Shade !'

“Such recantation had for me no charm,
 Nor would I bend to it; who should have
 grieved
 At aught, however fair, that bore the mien 780
 Of a conclusion, or catastrophe.
 Why then conceal, that, when the simply good
 In timid selfishness withdrew, I sought
 Other support, not scrupulous whence it came ;
 And, by what compromise it stood, not nice ?
 Enough if notions seemed to be high-pitched,
 And qualities determined.—Among men 787
 So charactered did I maintain a strife
 Hopeless, and still more hopeless every hour ;
 But, in the process, I began to feel 790
 That, if the emancipation of the world
 Were missed, I should at least secure my own,
 And be in part compensated. For rights,
 Widely—inveterately usurped upon,
 I spake with vehemence ; and promptly seized
 All that Abstraction furnished for my needs 796
 Or purposes ; nor scrupled to proclaim,
 And propagate, by liberty of life,
 Those new persuasions. Not that I rejoiced,
 Or even found pleasure, in such vagrant course,
 For its own sake ; but farthest from the walk 801
 Which I had trod in happiness and peace,

Was most inviting to a troubled mind ;
That, in a struggling and distempered world,
Saw a seductive image of herself. 805
Yet, mark the contradictions of which Man
Is still the sport! Here Nature was my
guide,
The Nature of the dissolute ; but thee,
O fostering Nature ! I rejected—smiled
At others' tears in pity ; and in scorn 810
At those, which thy soft influence sometimes
drew
From my unguarded heart. — The tranquil
shores
Of Britain circumscribed me ; else, perhaps
I might have been entangled among deeds,
Which, now, as infamous, I should abhor— 815
Despise, as senseless : for my spirit relished
Strangely the exasperation of that Land,
Which turned an angry beak against the down
Of her own breast ; confounded into hope
Of disencumbering thus her fretful wings. 820

“ But all was quieted by iron bonds
Of military sway. The shifting aims,
The moral interests, the creative might,
The varied functions and high attributes
Of civil action, yielded to a power 825
Formal, and odious, and contemptible.
—In Britain, ruled a panic dread of change ;
The weak were praised, rewarded, and ad-
vanced ;
And, from the impulse of a just disdain,
Once more did I retire into myself. 830
There feeling no contentment, I resolved
To fly, for safeguard, to some foreign shore,
Remote from Europe ; from her blasted hopes ;
Her fields of carnage, and polluted air.

“ Fresh blew the wind, when o’er the Atlantic
 Main 835
 The ship went gliding with her thoughtless
 crew ;
 And who among them but an Exile, freed
 From discontent, indifferent, pleased to sit
 Among the busily-employed, not more
 With obligation charged, with service taxed,
 Than the loose pendant—to the idle wind 841
 Upon the tall mast streaming. But, ye Powers
 Of soul and sense mysteriously allied,
 O, never let the Wretched, if a choice
 Be left him, trust the freight of his distress 845
 To a long voyage on the silent deep !
 For, like a plague, will memory break out ;
 And, in the blank and solitude of things,
 Upon his spirit, with a fever’s strength,
 Will conscience prey.—Feebly must they have
 felt 850
 Who, in old time, attired with snakes and whips
 The vengeful Furies. *Beautiful* regards
 Were turned on me—the face of her I loved ;
 The Wife and Mother pitifully fixing
 Tender reproaches, insupportable ! 855
 Where now that boasted liberty ? No welcome
 From unknown objects I received ; and those,
 Known and familiar, which the vaulted sky
 Did, in the placid clearness of the night,
 Disclose, had accusations to prefer 860
 Against my peace. Within the cabin stood
 That volume—as a compass for the soul—
 Revered among the nations. I implored
 Its guidance ; but the infallible support 864
 Of faith was wanting. Tell me, why refused
 To One by storms annoyed and adverse winds ;
 Perplexed with currents ; of his weakness sick ;
 Of vain endeavours tired ; and by his own,

And by his nature's, ignorance, dismayed !

“Long wished-for sight, the Western World
appeared ; 870

And, when the ship was moored, I leaped
ashore

Indignantly—resolved to be a man,
Who, having o'er the past no power, would live
No longer in subjection to the past,
With abject mind—from a tyrannic lord 875
Inviting penance, fruitlessly endured :
So, like a fugitive, whose feet have cleared
Some boundary, which his followers may not
cross

In prosecution of their deadly chase,
Respiring I looked round.—How bright the
sun, 880

The breeze how soft ! Can any thing produced
In the old World compare, thought I, for
power

And majesty with this gigantic stream,
Sprung from the desert ? And behold a city
Fresh, youthful, and aspiring ! What are these
To me, or I to them ? As much, at least 886
As he desires that they should be, whom winds
And waves have wafted to this distant shore,
In the condition of a damaged seed,
Whose fibres cannot, if they would, take root.
Here may I roam at large ;—my business is, 891
Roaming at large, to observe, and not to feel
And, therefore, not to act—convinced that all
Which bears the name of action, howsoe'er
Beginning, ends in servitude—still painful, 895
And mostly profitless. And, sooth to say,
On nearer view, a motley spectacle
Appeared, of high pretensions—unreproved
But by the obstreperous voice of higher still ;

Big passions strutting on a petty stage ; 900
 Which a detached spectator may regard
 Not unamused.—But ridicule demands
 Quick change of objects ; and, to laugh alone,
 At a composing distance from the haunts
 Of strife and folly, though it be a treat 905
 As choice as musing Leisure can bestow ;
 Yet, in the very centre of the crowd,
 To keep the secret of a poignant scorn,
 Howe'er to airy Demons suitable,
 Of all unsocial courses, is least fit 910
 For the gross spirit of mankind,—the one
 That soonest fails to please, and quickliest turns
 Into vexation.

Let us, then, I said,
 Leave this unknit Republic to the scourge
 Of her own passions ; and to regions haste, 915
 Whose shades have never felt the encroaching
 axe,
 Or soil endured a transfer in the mart
 Of dire rapacity. There, Man abides,
 Primeval Nature's child. A creature weak
 In combination, (wherefore else driven back 920
 So far, and of his old inheritance
 So easily deprived ?) but, for that cause,
 More dignified, and stronger in himself ;
 Whether to act, judge, suffer, or enjoy.
 True, the intelligence of social art 925
 Hath overpowered his forefathers, and soon
 Will sweep the remnant of his line away ;
 But contemplations, worthier, nobler far
 Than her destructive energies, attend
 His independence, when along the side 930
 Of Mississippi, or that northern stream
 That spreads into successive seas, he walks ;
 Pleased to perceive his own unshackled life,
 And his innate capacities of soul,

There imaged : or when, having gained the top
 Of some commanding eminence, which yet 936
 Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys
 Regions of wood and wide savannah, vast
 Expanse of unappropriated earth,
 With mind that sheds a light on what he sees ;
 Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun, 941
 Pouring above his head its radiance down
 Upon a living and rejoicing world !

“ So, westward, tow'rd the unviolated woods
 I bent my way ; and, roaming far and wide, 945
 Failed not to greet the merry Mocking-bird ;
 And, while the melancholy Muccawiss
 (The sportive bird's companion in the grove)
 Repeated o'er and o'er his plaintive cry,
 I sympathised at leisure with the sound ; 950
 But that pure archetype of human greatness,
 I found him not. There, in his stead, appeared
 A creature, squalid, vengeful, and impure ;
 Remorseless, and submissive to no law
 But superstitious fear, and abject sloth. 955

“ Enough is told ! Here am I—ye have heard
 What evidence I seek, and vainly seek ;
 What from my fellow-beings I require,
 And either they have not to give, or I
 Lack virtue to receive ; what I myself, 960
 Too oft by wilful forfeiture, have lost
 Nor can regain. How languidly I look
 Upon this visible fabric of the world,
 May be divined—perhaps it hath been said :—
 But spare your pity, if there be in me 965
 Aught that deserves respect : for I exist,
 Within myself, not comfortless.—The tenour
 Which my life holds, he readily may conceive
 Whoe'er hath stood to watch a mountain brook

In some still passage of its course, and seen, 970
Within the depths of its capacious breast,
Inverted trees, rocks, clouds, and azure sky ;
And, on its glassy surface, specks of foam,
And conglobated bubbles undissolved,
Numerous as stars ; that, by their onward
lapse, 975

Betray to sight the motion of the stream,
Else imperceptible. Meanwhile, is heard
A softened roar, or murmur ; and the sound
Though soothing, and the little floating isles
Though beautiful, are both by Nature charged
With the same pensive office ; and make known
Through what perplexing labyrinths, abrupt 982
Precipitations, and untoward straits,
The earth-born wanderer hath passed ; and
quickly,

That respite o'er, like traverses and toils 985
Must he again encounter.—Such a stream
Is human Life ; and so the Spirit fares
In the best quiet to her course allowed ;
And such is mine,—save only for a hope
That my particular current soon will reach 990
The unfathomable gulf, where all is still ! ”

BOOK FOURTH.

DESPONDENCY CORRECTED.

ARGUMENT.

State of feeling produced by the foregoing Narrative.—A belief in a superintending Providence the only adequate support under affliction.—Wanderer's ejaculation.—Acknowledges the difficulty of a lively faith.—Hence immoderate sorrow.—Exhortations.—How received.—Wanderer applies his discourse to that other cause of dejection in the Solitary's mind.—Disappointment from the French Revolution.—States grounds of hope, and insists on the necessity of patience and fortitude with respect to the course of great revolutions.—Knowledge the source of tranquillity.—Rural Solitude favourable to knowledge of the inferior Creatures; Study of their habits and ways recommended; exhortation to bodily exertion and communion with Nature.—Morbid Solitude pitiable.—Superstition better than apathy.—Apathy and destitution unknown in the infancy of society.—The various modes of Religion prevented it.—Illustrated in the Jewish, Persian, Babylonian, Chaldean, and Grecian modes of belief.—Solitary interposes.—Wanderer points out the influence of religious and imaginative feeling in the humble ranks of society, illustrated from present and past times.—These principles tend to recal exploded superstitions and popery.—Wanderer rebuts this charge, and contrasts the dignities of the Imagination with the presumptuous littleness of certain modern Philosophers.—Recommends other lights and guides.—Asserts the power of the Soul to regenerate herself; Solitary asks how.—Reply.—Personal appeal.—Exhortation to activity of body renewed.—How to commune with Nature.—Wanderer concludes with a legitimate union of the imagination, affections, understanding, and reason.—Effect of his discourse.—Evening; Return to the Cottage.

DESPONDENCY CORRECTED.

HERE closed the Tenant of that lonely vale
His mournful narrative—commenced in pain,
In pain commenced, and ended without peace :
Yet tempered, not unfrequently, with strains
Of native feeling, grateful to our minds ; 5
And yielding surely some relief to his,
While we sate listening with compassion due.
A pause of silence followed ; then, with voice
That did not falter though the heart was moved,
The Wanderer said :—

“ One adequate support 10
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists—one only ; an assured belief
That the procession of our fate, howe’er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power ; 15
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.
—The darts of anguish *fix* not where the seat
Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the Will supreme 20
For time and for eternity ; by faith,
Faith absolute in God, including hope,
And the defence that lies in boundless love
Of his perfections ; with habitual dread
Of aught unworthily conceived, endured 25
Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone,
To the dishonour of his holy name.

Soul of our Souls, and safeguard of the world !
 Sustain, thou only canst, the sick of heart ;
 Restore their languid spirits, and recal 30
 Their lost affections unto thee and thine !”

Then, as we issued from that covert nook,
 He thus continued, lifting up his eyes
 To heaven :—“ How beautiful this dome of sky ;
 And the vast hills, in fluctuation fixed 35
 At thy command, how awful ! Shall the Soul,
 Human and rational, report of thee
 Even less than these !—Be mute who will, who
 can,

Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice :
 My lips, that may forget thee in the crowd, 40
 Cannot forget thee here ; where thou hast built,
 For thy own glory, in the wilderness !
 Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine,
 In such a temple as we now behold
 Reared for thy presence : therefore am I bound
 To worship, here, and every where—as one 46
 Not doomed to ignorance, though forced to
 tread,

From childhood up, the ways of poverty ;
 From unreflecting ignorance preserved,
 And from debasement rescued.—By thy grace
 The particle divine remained unquenched ; 51
 And, ’mid the wild weeds of a rugged soil,
 Thy bounty caused to flourish deathless flowers,
 From paradise transplanted : wintry age
 Impends ; the frost will gather round my heart ;
 If the flowers wither, I am worse than dead ! 56
 —Come, labour, when the worn-out frame
 requires

Perpetual sabbath ; come, disease and want ;
 And sad exclusion through decay of sense ;
 But leave me unabated trust in thee— 60

And let thy favour, to the end of life,
Inspire me with ability to seek
Repose and hope among eternal things—
Father of heaven and earth ! and I am rich,
And will possess my portion in content ! 65

“ And what are things eternal ?—powers
depart,”

The grey-haired Wanderer steadfastly replied,
Answering the question which himself had
asked,

“ Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
And passions hold a fluctuating seat : 70
But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,
Duty exists ;—immutably survive,
For our support, the measures and the forms,
Which an abstract intelligence supplies ; 75
Whose kingdom is, where time and space are
not.

Of other converse which mind, soul, and heart,
Do, with united urgency, require,
What more that may not perish ?—Thou, dread
source,

Prime, self-existing cause and end of all 80
That in the scale of being fill their place ;
Above our human region, or below,
Set and sustained ;—thou, who didst wrap the
cloud

Of infancy around us, that thyself,
Therein, with our simplicity awhile 85
Might'st hold, on earth, communion undis-
turbed ;

Who from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,
Or from its death-like void, with punctual care,
And touch as gentle as the morning light,
Restor'st us, daily, to the powers of sense 90

And reason's steadfast rule—thou, thou alone
Art everlasting, and the blessed Spirits,
Which thou includest, as the sea her waves :
For adoration thou endur'st ; endure
For consciousness the motions of thy will ; 95
For apprehension those transcendent truths
Of the pure intellect, that stand as laws
(Submission constituting strength and power)
Even to thy Being's infinite majesty !
This universe shall pass away—a work 100
Glorious ! because the shadow of thy might,
A step, or link, for intercourse with thee.
Ah ! if the time must come, in which my feet
No more shall stray where meditation leads,
By flowing stream, through wood, or craggy
wild, 105
Loved haunts like these ; the unimprisoned
Mind
May yet have scope to range among her own,
Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.
If the dear faculty of sight should fail,
Still, it may be allowed me to remember 110
What visionary powers of eye and soul
In youth were mine ; when, stationed on the top
Of some huge hill—expectant, I beheld
The sun rise up, from distant climes returned
Darkness to chase, and sleep ; and bring the
day 115
His bounteous gift ! or saw him toward the deep
Sink, with a retinue of flaming clouds
Attended ; then, my spirit was entranced
With joy exulted to beatitude ;
The measure of my soul was filled with bliss, 120
And holiest love ; as earth, sea, air, with light,
With pomp, with glory, with magnificence !

“Those fervent raptures are for ever flown ;

And, since their date, my soul hath undergone
Change manifold, for better or for worse : 125
Yet cease I not to struggle, and aspire
Heavenward ; and chide the part of me that flags,
Through sinful choice ; or dread necessity
On human nature from above imposed.

'Tis, by comparison, an easy task 130

Earth to despise ; but, to converse with heaven—

This is not easy :—to relinquish all

We have, or hope, of happiness and joy,

And stand in freedom loosened from this world,

I deem not arduous ; but must needs confess 135

That 'tis a thing impossible to frame

Conceptions equal to the soul's desire ;

And the most difficult of tasks to *keep*

Heights which the soul is competent to gain.

—Man is of dust : ethereal hopes are his, 140

Which, when they should sustain themselves
aloft,

Want due consistence ; like a pillar of smoke,

That with majestic energy from earth

Rises ; but, having reached the thinner air,

Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen. 145

From this infirmity of mortal kind

Sorrow proceeds, which else were not ; at least,

If grief be something hallowed and ordained,

If, in proportion, it be just and meet,

Yet, through this weakness of the general heart,

Is it enabled to maintain its hold 151

In that excess which conscience disapproves.

For who could sink and settle to that point

Of selfishness ; so senseless who could be

As long and perseveringly to mourn 155

For any object of his love, removed

From this unstable world, if he could fix

A satisfying view upon that state

Of pure, imperishable, blessedness,

Which reason promises, and holy writ 160
Ensures to all believers?—Yet mistrust
Is of such incapacity, methinks,
No natural branch ; despondency far less ;
And, least of all, is absolute despair.
—And, if there be whose tender frames have
 drooped 165
Even to the dust ; apparently, through weight
Of anguish unrelieved, and lack of power
An agonizing sorrow to transmute ;
Deem not that proof is here of hope withheld
When wanted most ; a confidence impaired 170
So pitiably, that, having ceased to see
With bodily eyes, they are borne down by love
Of what is lost, and perish through regret.
Oh ! no, the innocent Sufferer often sees
Too clearly ; feels too vividly ; and longs 175
To realize the vision, with intense
And over-constant yearning ;—there—there lies
The excess, by which the balance is destroyed.
Too, too contracted are these walls of flesh,
This vital warmth too cold, these visual orbs, 180
Though inconceivably endowed, too dim
For any passion of the soul that leads
To ecstasy ; and all the crooked paths
Of time and change disdaining, takes its course
Along the line of limitless desires. 185
I, speaking now from such disorder free,
Nor wrapt, nor craving, but in settled peace,
I cannot doubt that they whom you deplore
Are glorified ; or, if they sleep, shall wake
From sleep, and dwell with God in endless love.
Hope, below this, consists not with belief 191
In mercy, carried infinite degrees
Beyond the tenderness of human hearts :
Hope, below this, consists not with belief
In perfect wisdom, guiding mightiest power, 195

That finds no limits but her own pure will.

“ Here then we rest; not fearing for our creed
The worst that human reasoning can achieve,
To unsettle or perplex it : yet with pain
Acknowledging, and grievous self-reproach, 200
That, though immovably convinced, we want
Zeal, and the virtue to exist by faith
As soldiers live by courage ; as, by strength
Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas.
Alas ! the endowment of immortal power 205
Is matched unequally with custom, time,
And domineering faculties of sense
In *all*; in most with superadded foes,
Idle temptations ; open vanities,
Ephemeral offspring of the unblushing world ;
And, in the private regions of the mind, 211
Ill-governed passions, ranklings of despite,
Immoderate wishes, pining discontent,
Distress and care. What then remains?—To
seek

Those helps for his occasions ever near 215
Who lacks not will to use them ; vows, renewed
On the first motion of a holy thought ;
Vigils of contemplation ; praise ; and prayer—
A stream, which, from the fountain of the heart
Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows 220
Without access of unexpected strength.
But, above all, the victory is most sure
For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of conscience—conscience revered and
obeyed, 225
As God’s most intimate presence in the soul,
And his most perfect image in the world.
—Endeavour thus to live ; these rules regard ;
These helps solicit ; and a steadfast seat

Shall then be yours among the happy few 230
 Who dwell on earth, yet breathe empyreal air,
 Sons of the morning. For your nobler part,
 Ere disencumbered of her mortal chains,
 Doubt shall be quelled and trouble chased away ;
 With only such degree of sadness left 235
 As may support longings of pure desire ;
 And strengthen love, rejoicing secretly
 In the sublime attractions of the grave."

While, in this strain, the venerable Sage 239
 Poured forth his aspirations, and announced
 His judgments, near that lonely house we
 paced

A plot of green-sward, seemingly preserved
 By nature's care from wreck of scattered stones,
 And from encroachment of encircling heath :
 Small space ! but, for reiterated steps, 245
 Smooth and commodious ; as a stately deck
 Which to and fro the mariner is used
 To tread for pastime, talking with his mates,
 Or haply thinking of far-distant friends, 249
 While the ship glides before a steady breeze.
 Stillness prevailed around us : and the voice
 That spake was capable to lift the soul
 Toward regions yet more tranquil. But, me-
 thought,

That he, whose fixed despondency had given
 Impulse and motive to that strong discourse,
 Was less upraised in spirit than abashed ; 256
 Shrinking from admonition, like a man
 Who feels that to exhort is to reproach.
 Yet not to be diverted from his aim,
 The Sage continued :—

" For that other loss, 260

The loss of confidence in social man,
 By the unexpected transports of our age

Carried so high, that every thought, which
looked

Beyond the temporal destiny of the Kind,
To many seemed superfluous—as, no cause 265

Could e'er for such exalted confidence
Exist; so, none is now for fixed despair:

The two extremes are equally disowned
By reason: if, with sharp recoil, from one
You have been driven far as its opposite, 270

Between them seek the point whereon to build
Sound expectations. So doth he advise

Who shared at first the illusion; but was soon
Cast from the pedestal of pride by shocks 274

Which Nature gently gave, in woods and fields;
Nor unreprieved by Providence, thus speaking
To the inattentive children of the world:

'Vain-glorious Generation! what new powers
On you have been conferred? what gifts,
withheld

From your progenitors, have ye received, 280
Fit recompense of new desert? what claim

Are ye prepared to urge, that my decrees
For you should undergo a sudden change;

And the weak functions of one busy day,
Reclaiming and extirpating, perform 285

What all the slowly-moving years of time,
With their united force, have left undone?

By nature's gradual processes be taught;

By story be confounded! Ye aspire

Rashly, to fall once more; and that false fruit,
Which, to your over-weening spirits, yields 291

Hope of a flight celestial, will produce

Misery and shame. But Wisdom of her sons
Shall not the less, though late, be justified.'

“Such timely warning,” said the Wanderer,

“gave

295

That visionary voice ; and, at this day,
 When a Tartarean darkness overspreads
 The groaning nations ; when the impious rule,
 By will or by established ordinance,
 Their own dire agents, and constrain the good
 To acts which they abhor ; though I bewail 301
 This triumph, yet the pity of my heart
 Prevents me not from owning, that the law,
 By which mankind now suffers, is most just.
 For by superior energies ; more strict 305
 Affiance in each other ; faith more firm
 In their unhallowed principles ; the bad
 Have fairly earned a victory o'er the weak,
 The vacillating, inconsistent good.
 Therefore, not unconsoled, I wait—in hope 310
 To see the moment, when the righteous cause
 Shall gain defenders zealous and devout
 As they who have opposed her ; in which
 Virtue

Will, to her efforts, tolerate no bounds
 That are not lofty as her rights ; aspiring 315
 By impulse of her own ethereal zeal.
 That spirit only can redeem mankind ;
 And when that sacred spirit shall appear,
 Then shall *our* triumph be complete as theirs.
 Yet, should this confidence prove vain, the
 wise

Have still the keeping of their proper peace ; 321
 Are guardians of their own tranquillity.
 They act, or they recede, observe, and feel ;
 'Knowing the heart of man is set to be
 The centre of this world, about the which 325
 Those revolutions of disturbances
 Still roll ; where all the aspècts of misery
 Predominate ; whose strong effects are such
 As he must bear, being powerless to redress ;
And that unless above himself he can 330

Erect himself, how poor a thing is Man ! ¹

“ Happy is he who lives to understand,
Not human nature only, but explores
All natures,—to the end that he may find
The law that governs each ; and where begins
The union, the partition where, that makes 336
Kind and degree, among all visible Beings ;
The constitutions, powers, and faculties,
Which they inherit,—cannot step beyond,—
And cannot fall beneath ; that do assign 340
To every class its station and its office,
Through all the mighty commonwealth of
things ;

Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man.
Such converse, if directed by a meek,
Sincere, and humble spirit, teaches love : 345
For knowledge is delight ; and such delight
Breeds love : yet, suited as it rather is
To thought and to the climbing intellect,
It teaches less to love, than to adore ;
If that be not indeed the highest love !” 350

“ Yet,” said I, tempted here to interpose,
“ The dignity of life is not impaired
By aught that innocently satisfies
The humbler cravings of the heart ; and he 354
Is still a happier man, who, for those heights
Of speculation not unfit, descends ;
And such benign affections cultivates
Among the inferior kinds ; not merely those
That he may call his own, and which depend,
As individual objects of regard, 360
Upon his care, from whom he also looks
For signs and tokens of a mutual bond ;

¹ Daniel.

But others, far beyond this narrow sphere,
 Whom, for the very sake of love, he loves.
 Nor is it a mean praise of rural life 365
 And solitude, that they do favour most,
 Most frequently call forth, and best sustain,
 These pure sensations ; that can penetrate
 The obstreperous city ; on the barren seas
 Are not unfelt ; and much might recommend,
 How much they might inspirit and endear, 371
 The loneliness of this sublime retreat ! ”

“ Yes,” said the Sage, resuming the discourse
 Again directed to his downcast Friend,
 “ If, with the froward will and grovelling soul
 Of man, offended, liberty is here, 376
 And invitation every hour renewed,
 To mark *their* placid state, who never heard
 Of a command which they have power to break,
 Or rule which they are tempted to transgress :
 These, with a soothed or elevated heart, 381
 May we behold ; their knowledge register ;
 Observe their ways ; and, free from envy, find
 Complacence there :—but wherefore this to you ?
 I guess that, welcome to your lonely hearth,
 The redbreast, ruffled up by winter’s cold 386
 Into a ‘ feathery bunch,’ feeds at your hand :
 A box, perchance, is from your casement hung
 For the small wren to build in ;—not in vain,
 The barriers disregarding that surround 390
 This deep abiding place, before your sight
 Mounts on the breeze the butterfly ; and soars,
 Small creature as she is, from earth’s bright
 flowers,
 Into the dewy clouds. Ambition reigns
 In the waste wilderness : the Soul ascends 395
 Drawn towards her native firmament of heaven,
 When the fresh eagle, in the month of May,

Upborne, at evening, on replenished wing,
This shaded valley leaves ; and leaves the dark
Empurpled hills, conspicuously renewing 400
A proud communication with the sun
Low sunk beneath the horizon !—List !—I heard,
From yon huge breast of rock, a voice sent forth
As if the visible mountain made the cry. 404
Again ! ”—The effect upon the soul was such
As he expressed : from out the mountain’s heart
The solemn voice appeared to issue, startling
The blank air—for the region all around
Stood empty of all shape of life, and silent
Save for that single cry, the unanswer’d bleat
Of a poor lamb—left somewhere to itself, 411
The plaintive spirit of the solitude !
He paused, as if unwilling to proceed,
Through consciousness that silence in such
place
Was best, the most affecting eloquence. 415
But soon his thoughts returned upon them-
selves,
And, in soft tone of speech, thus he resumed.

“ Ah ! if the heart, too confidently raised,
Perchance too lightly occupied, or lulled
Too easily, despise or overlook 420
The vassalage that binds her to the earth,
Her sad dependence upon time, and all
The trepidations of mortality,
What place so destitute and void—but there
The little flower her vanity shall check ; 425
The trailing worm reprove her thoughtless
pride ?

“ These craggy regions, these chaotic wilds,
Does that benignity pervade, that warms
The mole contented with her darksome walk

In the cold ground ; and to the emmet gives
Her foresight, and intelligence that makes 431
The tiny creatures strong by social league ;
Supports the generations, multiplies
Their tribes, till we behold a spacious plain
Or grassy bottom, all, with little hills— 435
Their labour, covered, as a lake with waves ;
Thousands of cities, in the desert place
Built up of life, and food, and means of life !
Nor wanting here, to entertain the thought,
Creatures that in communities exist 440
Less, as might seem, for general guardianship
Or through dependence upon mutual aid,
Than by participation of delight
And a strict love of fellowship, combined.
What other spirit can it be that prompts 445
The gilded summer flies to mix and weave
Their sports together in the solar beam,
Or in the gloom of twilight hum their joy ?
More obviously the self-same influence rules
The feathered kinds ; the fieldfare's pensive
flock, 450
The cawing rooks, and sea-mews from afar,
Hovering above these inland solitudes,
By the rough wind unscattered, at whose call
Up through the trenches of the long-drawn
vales
Their voyage was begun : nor is its power 455
Unfelt among the sedentary fowl
That seek yon pool, and there prolong their stay
In silent congress ; or together roused
Take flight ; while with their clang the air re-
sounds.
And, over all, in that ethereal vault, 460
Is the mute company of changeful clouds ;
Bright apparition, suddenly put forth,
The rainbow smiling on the faded storm ;

The mild assemblage of the starry heavens ;
And the great sun, earth's universal lord ! 465

“ How bountiful is Nature ! he shall find
Who seeks not ; and to him, who hath not
asked,

Large measures shall be dealt. Three sabbath-
days

Are scarcely told, since, on a service bent
Of mere humanity, you clomb those heights ; 470
And what a marvellous and heavenly show
Was suddenly revealed !—the swains moved on,
And heeded not : you lingered, you perceived
And felt, deeply as living man could feel.

There is a luxury in self-dispraise ; 475

And inward self-disparagement affords
To meditative spleen a grateful feast.

Trust me, pronouncing on your own desert,
You judge unthankfully : distempered nerves
Infect the thoughts : the languor of the frame
Depresses the soul's vigour. Quit your couch—
Cleave not so fondly to your moody cell ; 482
Nor let the hallowed powers, that shed from
heaven

Stillness and rest, with disapproving eye
Look down upon your taper, through a watch. 485
Of midnight hours, unseasonably twinkling
In this deep Hollow, like a sullen star
Dimly reflected in a lonely pool.

Take courage, and withdraw yourself from ways
That run not parallel to nature's course. 490

Rise with the lark ! your matins shall obtain
Grace, be their composition what it may,
If but with hers performed ; climb once again,
Climb every day, those ramparts ; meet the
breeze

Upon their tops, adventurous as a bee 495

That from your garden thither soars, to feed
 On new-blown heath ; let yon commanding rock
 Be your frequented watch-tower ; roll the stone
 In thunder down the mountains ; with all your
 might 499
 Chase the wild goat ; and if the bold red deer
 Fly to those harbours, driven by hound and
 horn
 Loud echoing, add your speed to the pursuit ;
 So, wearied to your hut shall you return,
 And sink at evening into sound repose."

The Solitary lifted toward the hills 505
 A kindling eye :—accordant feelings rushed
 Into my bosom, whence these words broke
 forth :

" Oh ! what a joy it were, in vigorous health,
 To have a body (this our vital frame
 With shrinking sensibility endued, 510
 And all the nice regards of flesh and blood)
 And to the elements surrender it
 As if it were a spirit !—How divine,
 The liberty, for frail, for mortal, man
 To roam at large among unpeopled glens 515
 And mountainous retirements, only trod
 By devious footsteps ; regions consecrate
 To oldest time ! and, reckless of the storm
 That keeps the raven quiet in her nest,
 Be as a presence or a motion—one 520
 Among the many there ; and while the mists
 Flying, and rainy vapours, call out shapes
 And phantoms from the crags and solid earth
 As fast as a musician scatters sounds
 Out of an instrument ; and while the streams
 (As at a first creation and in haste 526
 To exercise their untried faculties)
 Descending from the region of the clouds,

And starting from the hollows of the earth
More multitudinous every moment, rend 530
Their way before them—what a joy to roam
An equal among mightiest energies ;
And haply sometimes with articulate voice,
Amid the deafening tumult, scarcely heard
By him that utters it, exclaim aloud, 535
‘Rage on ye elements ! let moon and stars
Their aspects lend, and mingle in their turn
With this commotion (ruinous though it be)
From day to night, from night to day, pro-
longed ! ’ ”

“ Yes,” said the Wanderer, taking from my
lips 540
The strain of transport, “ whosoe’er in youth
Has, through ambition of his soul, given way
To such desires, and grasped at such delight,
Shall feel congenial stirrings late and long,
In spite of all the weakness that life brings, 545
Its cares and sorrows ; he, though taught to own
The tranquillizing power of time, shall wake,
Wake sometimes to a noble restlessness—
Loving the sports which once he gloried in. 549

“ Compatriot, Friend, remote are Garry’s hills,
The streams far distant of your native glen ;
Yet is their form and image here expressed
With brotherly resemblance. Turn your steps
Wherever fancy leads ; by day, by night,
Are various engines working, not the same 555
As those with which your soul in youth was
moved,
But by the great Artificer endowed
With no inferior power. You dwell alone ;
You walk, you live, you speculate alone ; 559
Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince,

For you a stately gallery maintain
 Of gay or tragic pictures. You have seen,
 Have acted, suffered, travelled far, observed
 With no incurious eye ; and books are yours,
 Within whose silent chambers treasure lies 565
 Preserved from age to age ; more precious far
 Than that accumulated store of gold
 And orient gems, which, for a day of need,
 The Sultan hides deep in ancestral tombs.
 These hoards of truth you can unlock at will : 570
 And music waits upon your skilful touch,
 Sounds which the wandering shepherd from
 these heights
 Hears, and forgets his purpose ;—furnished
 thus,
 How can you droop, if willing to be upraised ?

“ A piteous lot it were to flee from Man— 575
 Yet not rejoice in Nature. He, whose hours
 Are by domestic pleasure uncaressed
 And unenlivened ; who exists whole years
 Apart from benefits received or done
 'Mid the transactions of the bustling crowd ; 580
 Who neither hears, nor feels a wish to hear,
 Of the world's interests—such a one hath need
 Of a quick fancy and an active heart,
 That, for the day's consumption, books may
 yield 584
 Food not unwholesome ; earth and air correct
 His morbid humour, with delight supplied
 Or solace, varying as the seasons change.
 —Truth has her pleasure-grounds, her haunts
 of ease
 And easy contemplation ; gay parterres,
 And labyrinthine walks, her sunny glades 590
 And shady groves in studied contrast—each,
 For recreation, leading into each :

These may he range, if willing to partake
 Their soft indulgences, and in due time
 May issue thence, recruited for the tasks 595
 And course of service Truth requires from those
 Who tend her altars, wait upon her throne,
 And guard her fortresses. Who thinks, and
 feels,

And recognises ever and anon
 The breeze of nature stirring in his soul, 600
 Why need such man go desperately astray,
 And nurse 'the dreadful appetite of death?'
 If tired with systems, each in its degree
 Substantial, and all crumbling in their turn,
 Let him build systems of his own, and smile 605
 At the fond work, demolished with a touch;
 If unreligious, let him be at once
 Among ten thousand innocents, enrolled
 A pupil in the many-chambered school,
 Where superstition weaves her airy dreams. 610

“Life's autumn past, I stand on winter's verge;
 And daily lose what I desire to keep:
 Yet rather would I instantly decline
 To the traditionary sympathies
 Of a most rustic ignorance, and take 615
 A fearful apprehension from the owl
 Or death-watch: and as readily rejoice,
 If two auspicious magpies crossed my way;—
 To this would rather bend than see and hear
 The repetitions wearisome of sense, 620
 Where soul is dead, and feeling hath no place;
 Where knowledge, ill begun in cold remark
 On outward things, with formal inference ends;
 Or, if the mind turn inward, she recoils
 At once—or, not recoiling, is perplexed— 625
 Lost in a gloom of uninspired research;
 Meanwhile, the heart within the heart, the seat

Where peace and happy consciousness should
dwell,

On its own axis restlessly revolving, 629

Seeks, yet can nowhere find, the light of truth.

“Upon the breast of new-created earth
Man walked; and when and wheresoe’er he
moved,

Alone or mated, solitude was not.

He heard, borne on the wind, the articulate
voice

Of God; and Angels to his sight appeared 635

Crowning the glorious hills of paradise;

Or through the groves gliding like morning
mist

Enkindled by the sun. He sate—and talked

With winged Messengers; who daily brought

To his small island in the ethereal deep 640

Tidings of joy and love.—From those pure
heights

(Whether of actual vision, sensible

To sight and feeling, or that in this sort

Have condescendingly been shadowed forth

Communications spiritually maintained, 645

And intuitions moral and divine)

Fell Human-kind—to banishment condemned

That flowing years repealed not: and distress

And grief spread wide; but Man escaped the
doom

Of destitution;—solitude was not. 650

—Jehovah—shapeless Power above all Powers,

Single and one, the omnipresent God,

By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,

Or cloud of darkness, localised in heaven;

On earth, enshrined within the wandering ark;

Or, out of Sion, thundering from his throne 656

Between the Cherubim—on the chosen Race

Showered miracles, and ceased not to dispense
Judgments, that filled the land from age to
age

With hope, and love, and gratitude, and fear; 660
And with amazement smote;—thereby to assert
His scorned, or unacknowledged, sovereignty.

And when the One, ineffable of name,
Of nature indivisible, withdrew
From mortal adoration or regard, 665

Not then was Deity engulfed; nor Man,
The rational creature, left, to feel the weight
Of his own reason, without sense or thought
Of higher reason and a purer will,

To benefit and bless, through mightier power:—
Whether the Persian—zealous to reject 671

Altar and image, and the inclusive walls
And roofs of temples built by human hands—
To loftiest heights ascending, from their tops,
With myrtle-wreathed tiara on his brow, 675

Presented sacrifice to moon and stars,
And to the winds and mother elements,
And the whole circle of the heavens, for him
A sensitive existence, and a God,

With lifted hands invoked, and songs of praise:
Or, less reluctantly to bonds of sense 681

Yielding his soul, the Babylonian framed
For influence undefined a personal shape;
And, from the plain, with toil immense, up-
reared

Tower eight times planted on the top of
tower, 685

That Belus, nightly to his splendid couch
Descending, there might rest; upon that height
Pure and serene, diffused—to overlook

Winding Euphrates, and the city vast
Of his devoted worshippers, far-stretched, 690
With grove and field and garden interspersed;

Their town, and foodful region for support
Against the pressure of beleaguering war.

“ Chaldean Shepherds, ranging trackless
fields,
Beneath the concave of unclouded skies 695
Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
Looked on the polar star, as on a guide
And guardian of their course, that never closed
His steadfast eye. The planetary Five
With a submissive reverence they beheld ; 700
Watched, from the centre of their sleeping
flocks,
Those radiant Mercuries, that seemed to move
Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
Decrees and resolutions of the Gods ;
And, by their aspects, signifying works 705
Of dim futurity, to Man revealed.
—The imaginative faculty was lord
Of observations natural ; and, thus
Led on, those shepherds made report of stars
In set rotation passing to and fro, 710
Between the orbs of our apparent sphere
And its invisible counterpart, adorned
With answering constellations, under earth,
Removed from all approach of living sight
But present to the dead ; who, so they deemed,
Like those celestial messengers beheld 716
All accidents, and judges were of all.

“ The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
Rivers and fertile plains, and sounding shores,—
Under a cope of sky more variable, 720
Could find commodious place for every God,
Promptly received, as prodigally brought,
From the surrounding countries, at the choice
Of all adventurers. With unrivalled skill,

As nicest observation furnished hints 725
For studious fancy, his quick hand bestowed
On fluent operations a fixed shape;
Metal or stone, idolatrously served.
And yet—triumphant o’er this pompous show
Of art, this palpable array of sense, 730
On every side encountered; in despite
Of the gross fictions chanted in the streets
By wandering Rhapsodists; and in contempt
Of doubt and bold denial hourly urged 734
Amid the wrangling schools—a SPIRIT hung,
Beautiful region! o’er thy towns and farms,
Statues and temples, and memorial tombs;
And emanations were perceived; and acts
Of immortality, in Nature’s course,
Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt 740
As bonds, on grave philosopher imposed
And armed warrior; and in every grove
A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,
When piety more awful had relaxed.
—‘Take, running river, take these locks of
mine’— 745
Thus would the Votary say—‘this severed hair,
My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
Thankful for my beloved child’s return.
Thy banks, Cephissus, he again hath trod,
Thy murmurs heard; and drunk the crystal
lymph 750
With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lip,
And, all day long, moisten these flowery fields!’
And, doubtless, sometimes, when the hair was
shed
Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose
Of Life continuous, Being unimpaired; 755
That hath been, is, and where it was and is
There shall endure,—existence unexposed
To the blind walk of mortal accident;

From diminution safe and weakening age ;
 While man grows old, and dwindles, and
 decays ; 760
 And countless generations of mankind
 Depart ; and leave no vestige where they trod.

“ We live by Admiration, Hope, and Love ;
 And, even as these are well and widely fixed,
 In dignity of being we ascend. 765
 But what is error ? ” — “ Answer he who can ! ”
 The Sceptic somewhat haughtily exclaimed :
 “ Love, Hope, and Admiration—are they not
 Mad Fancy’s favourite vassals ? Does not life
 Use them, full oft, as pioneers to ruin, 770
 Guides to destruction ? Is it well to trust
 Imagination’s light when reason’s fails,
 The unguarded taper where the guarded faints ?
 —Stoop from those heights, and soberly declare
 What error is ; and, of our errors, which 775
 Doth most debase the mind ; the genuine seats
 Of power, where are they ? Who shall regulate,
 With truth, the scale of intellectual rank ? ”

“ Methinks,” persuasively the Sage replied,
 “ That for this arduous office you possess 780
 Some rare advantages. Your early days
 A grateful recollection must supply
 Of much exalted good by Heaven vouchsafed
 To dignify the humblest state.—Your voice
 Hath, in my hearing, often testified 785
 That poor men’s children, they, and they alone,
 By their condition taught, can understand
 The wisdom of the prayer that daily asks
 For daily bread. A consciousness is yours
 How feelingly religion may be learned 790
 In smoky cabins, from a mother’s tongue—
 Heard while the dwelling vibrates to the din

Of the contiguous torrent, gathering strength
At every moment—and, with strength, increase
Of fury ; or, while snow is at the door, 795
Assaulting and defending, and the wind,
A sightless labourer, whistles at his work—
Fearful ; but resignation tempers fear,
And piety is sweet to infant minds.

—The Shepherd-lad, that in the sunshine
carves, 800

On the green turf, a dial—to divide
The silent hours ; and who to that report
Can portion out his pleasures, and adapt,
Throughout a long and lonely summer's day
His round of pastoral duties, is not left 805
With less intelligence for *moral* things
Of gravest import. Early he perceives,
Within himself, a measure and a rule,
Which to the sun of truth he can apply,
That shines for him, and shines for all man-
kind. 810

Experience daily fixing his regards
On nature's wants, he knows how few they are,
And where they lie, how answered and appeased.
This knowledge ample recompense affords
For manifold privations ; he refers 815
His notions to this standard ; on this rock
Rests his desires ; and hence, in after life,
Soul-strengthening patience, and sublime con-
tent.

Imagination—not permitted here
To waste her powers, as in the worldling's
mind, 820

On fickle pleasures, and superfluous cares,
And trivial ostentation—is left free
And puissant to range the solemn walks
Of time and nature, girded by a zone 824
That, while it binds, invigorates and supports.

Acknowledge, then, that whether by the side
 Of his poor hut, or on the mountain top,
 Or in the cultured field, a Man so bred
 (Take from him what you will upon the score
 Of ignorance or illusion) lives and breathes 830
 For noble purposes of mind: his heart
 Beats to the heroic song of ancient days;
 His eye distinguishes, his soul creates.
 And those illusions, which excite the scorn
 Or move the pity of unthinking minds, 835
 Are they not mainly outward ministers
 Of inward conscience? with whose service
 charged

They came and go, appeared and disappear,
 Diverting evil purposes, remorse
 Awakening, chastening an intemperate grief, 840
 Or pride of heart abating: and, whene'er
 For less important ends those phantoms move,
 Who would forbid them, if their presence serve,
 On thinly-peopled mountains and wild heaths,
 Filling a space, else vacant, to exalt 845
 The forms of Nature, and enlarge her powers?

“Once more to distant ages of the world
 Let us revert, and place before our thoughts
 The face which rural solitude might wear
 To the unenlightened swains of pagan Greece.
 —In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman,
 stretched 851

On the soft grass through half a summer's day,
 With music lulled his indolent repose:
 And, in some fit of weariness, if he,
 When his own breath was silent, chanced to
 hear 855

A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
 Which his poor skill could make, his fancy
 fetched,

Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,
A beardless Youth, who touched a golden lute,
And filled the illumined groves with ravish-
ment. 860

The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye
Up towards the crescent moon, with grateful
heart

Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
That timely light, to share his joyous sport :
And hence, a beaming Goddess with her
Nymphs, 865

Across the lawn and through the darksome
grove,

Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes
By echo multiplied from rock or cave,
Swept in the storm of chase ; as moon and stars
Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven, 870
When winds are blowing strong. The traveller
slaked

His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and
thanked

The Naiad. Sunbeams, upon distant hills
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be trans-
formed 875

Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly.

The Zephyrs fanning, as they passed, their
wings,

Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom they
wooed

With gentle whisper. Withered boughs gro-
tesque, 879

Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain side ;
And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
Of the live deer, or goat's depending beard,—

These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
Of gamesome Deities ; or Pan himself, 886
The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring God !”

The strain was aptly chosen ; and I could
mark
Its kindly influence, o'er the yielding brow
Of our Companion, gradually diffused ; 890
While, listening, he had paced the noiseless
turf,
Like one whose untired ear a murmuring
stream

Detains; but tempted now to interpose,
He with a smile exclaimed :—
 “ ’Tis well you speak
At a safe distance from our native land, 895
And from the mansions where our youth was
taught.

The true descendants of those godly men
Who swept from Scotland, in a flame of zeal,
Shrine, altar, image, and the massy piles
That harboured them,—the souls retaining yet
The churlish features of that after-race 901
Who fled to woods, caverns, and jutting rocks,
In deadly scorn of superstitious rites,
Or what their scruples construed to be such—
How, think you, would they tolerate this
scheme 905

Of fine propensities, that tends, if urged
Far as it might be urged, to sow afresh
The weeds of Romish phantasy, in vain
Uprooted; would re-consecrate our wells 909
To good Saint Fillan and to fair Saint Anne;
And from long banishment recal Saint Giles,
To watch again with tutelary love
O'er stately Edinburgh throned on crags?
A blessed restoration, to behold

The patron, on the shoulders of his priests, 915
Once more parading through her crowded
streets

Now simply guarded by the sober powers
Of science, and philosophy, and sense ! ”

This answer followed.—“ You have turned
my thoughts

Upon our brave Progenitors, who rose 920
Against idolatry with warlike mind,

And shrunk from vain observances, to lurk
In woods, and dwell under impending rocks
Ill-sheltered, and oft wanting fire and food ;
Why ?—for this very reason that they felt, 925

And did acknowledge, wheresoe’er they moved,
A spiritual presence, oft-times misconceived,
But still a high dependence, a divine

Bounty and government, that filled their hearts
With joy, and gratitude, and fear, and love ;
And from their fervent lips drew hymns of
praise, 931

That through the desert rang. Though favoured
less,

Far less, than these, yet such, in their degree,
Were those bewildered Pagans of old time.

Beyond their own poor natures and above 935
They looked ; were humbly thankful for the
good

Which the warm sun solicited, and earth
Bestowed ; were gladsome,—and their moral
sense

They fortified with reverence for the Gods ; 939
And they had hopes that overstepped the Grave.

“ Now, shall our great Discoverers,” he ex-
claimed,

Raising his voice triumphantly, “ obtain

From sense and reason less than these obtained,
 Though far misled? Shall men for whom our
 age

Unbaffled powers of vision hath prepared, 945
 To explore the world without and world within,
 Be joyless as the blind? Ambitious spirits—
 Whom earth, at this late season, hath produced
 To regulate the moving spheres, and weigh
 The planets in the hollow of their hand; 950
 And they who rather dive than soar, whose
 pains

Have solved the elements, or analysed
 The thinking principle—shall they in fact
 Prove a degraded Race? and what avails 954
 Renown, if their presumption make them such?
 Oh! there is laughter at their work in heaven!
 Inquire of ancient Wisdom; go, demand
 Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant
 That we should pry far off yet be unraised;
 That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,
 Viewing all objects unremittingly 961
 In disconnexion dead and spiritless;
 And still dividing, and dividing still,
 Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
 With the perverse attempt, while littleness 965
 May yet become more little; waging thus
 An impious warfare with the very life
 Of our own souls!

And if indeed there be
 An all-pervading Spirit, upon whom
 Our dark foundations rest, could he design 970
 That this magnificent effect of power,
 The earth we tread, the sky that we behold
 By day, and all the pomp which night reveals;
 That these—and that superior mystery
 Our vital frame, so fearfully devised, 975
 And the dread soul within it—should exist

Only to be examined, pondered, searched,
 Probed, vexed, and criticised ? — Accuse me not
 Of arrogance, unknown Wanderer as I am,
 If, having walked with Nature threescore years,
 And offered, far as frailty would allow, 981
 My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
 I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,
 Whom I have served, that their DIVINITY
 Revolts, offended at the ways of men 985
 Swayed by such motives, to such ends em-
 ployed ;
 Philosophers, who, though the human soul
 Be of a thousand faculties composed,
 And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
 This soul, and the transcendent universe, 990
 No more than as a mirror that reflects
 To proud Self-love her own intelligence ;
 That one, poor, finite object, in the abyss
 Of infinite Being, twinkling restlessly !

“ Nor higher place can be assigned to him
 And his compeers—the laughing Sage of
 France.— 996

Crowned was he, if my memory do not err,
 With laurel planted upon hoary hairs,
 In sign of conquest by his wit achieved
 And benefits his wisdom had conferred ; 1000
 His stooping body tottered with wreaths of
 flowers

Opprest, far less becoming ornaments
 Than Spring oft twines about a mouldering
 tree ;

Yet so it pleased a fond, a vain, old Man,
 And a most frivolous people. Him I mean 1005
 Who penned, to ridicule confiding faith,
 This sorry Legend ; which by chance we found
 Piled in a nook, through malice, as might seem,

Among more innocent rubbish."—Speaking
thus, 1009
With a brief notice when, and how, and where,
We had espied the book, he drew it forth ;
And courteously, as if the act removed,
At once, all traces from the good Man's heart
Of unbenign aversion or contempt, 1014
Restored it to its owner. "Gentle Friend,"
Herewith he grasped the Solitary's hand,
"You have known lights and guides better
than these.

Ah ! let not aught amiss within dispose
A noble mind to practise on herself,
And tempt opinion to support the wrongs 1020
Of passion : whatsoe'er be felt or feared,
From higher judgment-seats make no appeal
To lower : can you question that the soul
Inherits an allegiance, not by choice
To be cast off, upon an oath proposed 1025
By each new upstart notion ? In the ports
Of levity no refuge can be found,
No shelter, for a spirit in distress.
He, who by wilful disesteem of life
And proud insensibility to hope, 1030
Affronts the eye of Solitude, shall learn
That her mild nature can be terrible ;
That neither she nor Silence lack the power
To avenge their own insulted majesty.

"O blest seclusion ! when the mind admits
The law of duty ; and can therefore move 1036
Through each vicissitude of loss and gain,
Linked in entire complacence with her choice ;
When youth's presumptuousness is mellowed
down,
And manhood's vain anxiety dismissed ; 1040
When wisdom shows her seasonable fruit,

Upon the boughs of sheltering leisure hung
In sober plenty ; when the spirit stoops
To drink with gratitude the crystal stream
Of unreprieved enjoyment ; and is pleased 1045
To muse, and be saluted by the air
Of meek repentance, wafting wall-flower scents
From out the crumbling ruins of fallen pride
And chambers of transgression, now forlorn.
O, calm contented days, and peaceful nights !
Who, when such good can be obtained, would
strive 1051
To reconcile his manhood to a couch
Soft, as may seem, but, under that disguise,
Stuffed with the thorny substance of the past
For fixed annoyance ; and full oft beset 1055
With floating dreams, black and disconsolate,
The vapoury phantoms of futurity ?

“ Within the soul a faculty abides,
That with interpositions, which would hide
And darken, so can deal that they become 1060
Contingencies of pomp ; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light, 1065
In the green trees ; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own,
Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene. Like power abides 1070
In man’s celestial spirit ; virtue thus
Sets forth and magnifies herself ; thus feeds
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
From the encumbrances of mortal life, 1074
From error, disappointment—nay, from guilt ;
And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,

From palpable oppressions of despair.”

The Solitary by these words was touched
With manifest emotion, and exclaimed ;
“ But how begin ? and whence ?—‘ The Mind is
free—

Resolve,' the haughty Moralist would say,
'This single act is all that we demand.'

Alas! such wisdom bids a creature fly
Whose very sorrow is, that time hath shorn
His natural wings!—To friendship let him turn
For succour; but perhaps he sits alone 1086

On stormy waters, tossed in a little boat
That holds but him, and can contain no more!
Religion tells of amity sublime

Which no condition can preclude; of One 1090

Who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,
All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs :

But is that bounty absolute?—His gifts,
Are they not, still, in some degree, rewards
For acts of service? Can his love extend 1095
To hearts that own not him? Will showers of

grace,
 When in the sky no promise may be seen,
 Fall to refresh a parched and withered land ?
 Or shall the groaning Spirit cast her load
 At the Redeemer's feet ? ”

In rueful tone, 1100
With some impatience in his mien, he spake:
Back to my mind rushed all that had been
urged

To calm the Sufferer when his story closed ;
I looked for counsel as unbending now ;
But a discriminating sympathy 1105
Stooped to this apt reply :—

“As men from men
Do, in the constitution of their souls,

Differ, by mystery not to be explained;
 And as we fall by various ways, and sink
 One deeper than another, self-condemned 1110
 Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame;
 So manifold and various are the ways
 Of restoration, fashioned to the steps
 Of all infirmity, and tending all
 To the same point, attainable by all— 1115
 Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.
 For you, assuredly, a hopeful road
 Lies open: we have heard from you a voice
 At every moment softened in its course
 By tenderness of heart; have seen your eye, 1120
 Even like an altar lit by fire from heaven,
 Kindle before us.—Your discourse this day,
 That, like the fabled Lethe, wished to flow
 In creeping sadness, through oblivious shades
 Of death and night, has caught at every turn
 The colours of the sun. Access for you 1126
 Is yet preserved to principles of truth,
 Which the imaginative Will upholds
 In seats of wisdom, not to be approached
 By the inferior Faculty that moulds, 1130
 With her minute and speculative pains,
 Opinion, ever changing!

I have seen

A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
 Of inland ground, applying to his ear
 The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell; 1135
 To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
 Listened intensely; and his countenance soon
 Brightened with joy; for from within were
 heard

Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed
 Mysterious union with its native sea. 1140
 Even such a shell the universe itself
 Is to the ear of Faith; and there are times,

I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things ;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power ; 1145
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
Adore, and worship, when you know it not ;
Pious beyond the intention of your thought ;
Devout above the meaning of your will. 1150
—Yes, you have felt, and may not cease to feel.
The estate of man would be indeed forlorn
If false conclusions of the reasoning power
Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
Through which the ear converses with the
heart. 1155

Has not the soul, the being of your life,
Received a shock of awful consciousness,
In some calm season, when these lofty rocks
At night's approach bring down the unclouded
sky,

To rest upon their circumambient walls ; 1160
A temple framing of dimensions vast,
And yet not too enormous for the sound
Of human anthems,—choral song, or burst
Sublime of instrumental harmony,
To glorify the Eternal ! What if these 1165
Did never break the stillness that prevails
Here,—if the solemn nightingale be mute,
And the soft woodlark here did never chant
Her vespers,—Nature fails not to provide 1169
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights,
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks ;
The little rills, and waters numberless,
Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes 1174
With the loud streams : and often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,

One voice—the solitary raven, flying
 Athwart the concave of the dark blue dome,
 Unseen, perchance above all power of sight—
 An iron knell! with echoes from afar 1181
 Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
 The wanderer accompanies her flight
 Through the calm region, fades upon the ear,
 Diminishing by distance till it seemed 1185
 To expire; yet from the abyss is caught again,
 And yet again recovered!

But descending
 From these imaginative heights, that yield
 Far-stretching views into eternity,
 Acknowledge that to Nature's humbler power
 Your cherished sullenness is forced to bend 1191
 Even here, where her amenities are sown
 With sparing hand. Then trust yourself abroad
 To range her blooming bowers, and spacious
 fields,

Where on the labours of the happy throng 1195
 She smiles, including in her wide embrace
 City, and town, and tower,—and sea with ships
 Sprinkled;—be our Companion while we track
 Her rivers populous with gliding life;
 While, free as air, o'er printless sands we
 march, 1200

Or pierce the gloom of her majestic woods;
 Roaming, or resting under grateful shade
 In peace and meditative cheerfulness;
 Where living things, and things inanimate,
 Do speak, at Heaven's command, to eye and
 ear, 1205

And speak to social reason's inner sense,
 With inarticulate language.

For, the Man—
 Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms
 Of nature, who with understanding heart

Both knows and loves such objects as excite
 No morbid passions, no disquietude, 1211
 No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must feel
 The joy of that pure principle of love
 So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
 Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose 1215
 But seek for objects of a kindred love
 In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
 Accordingly he by degrees perceives
 His feelings of aversion softened down;
 A holy tenderness pervade his frame. 1220
 His sanity of reason not impaired,
 Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,
 From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
 And seeks for good; and finds the good he
 seeks:
 Until abhorrence and contempt are things 1225
 He only knows by name; and, if he hear,
 From other mouths, the language which they
 speak,
 He is compassionate; and has no thought,
 No feeling, which can overcome his love.

“ And further; by contemplating these Forms
 In the relations which they bear to man, 1231
 He shall discern, how, through the various
 means
 Which silently they yield, are multiplied
 The spiritual presences of absent things.
 Trust me, that for the instructed, time will
 come 1235
 When they shall meet no object but may teach
 Some acceptable lesson to their minds
 Of human suffering, or of human joy.
 So shall they learn, while all things speak of
 man,
 Their duties from all forms; and general laws,

And local accidents, shall tend alike 1241
To rouse, to urge; and, with the will, confer
The ability to spread the blessings wide
Of true philanthropy. The light of love
Not failing, perseverance from their steps 1245
Departing not, for them shall be confirmed
The glorious habit by which sense is made
Subservient still to moral purposes,
Auxiliar to divine. That change shall clothe
The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore 1250
The burthen of existence. Science then
Shall be a precious visitant; and then,
And only then, be worthy of her name:
For then her heart shall kindle; her dull eye,
Dull and inanimate, no more shall hang 1255
Chained to its object in brute slavery;
But taught with patient interest to watch
The processes of things, and serve the cause
Of order and distinctness, not for this
Shall it forget that its most noble use, 1260
Its most illustrious province, must be found
In furnishing clear guidance, a support
Not treacherous, to the mind's *excursive* power.
—So build we up the Being that we are;
Thus deeply drinking-in the soul of things, 1265
We shall be wise perforce; and, while inspired
By choice, and conscious that the Will is free,
Shall move unswerving, even as if impelled
By strict necessity, along the path
Of order and of good. Whate'er we see, 1270
Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine;
Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,
Earthly desires; and raise, to loftier heights
Of divine love, our intellectual soul." 1274

Here closed the Sage that eloquent harangue,
Poured forth with fervour in continuous stream,

Such as, remote, 'mid savage wilderness,
 An Indian Chief discharges from his breast
 Into the hearing of assembled tribes,
 In open circle seated round, and hushed 1280
 As the unbreathing air, when not a leaf
 Stirs in the mighty woods.—So did he speak:
 The words he uttered shall not pass away
 Dispersed, like music that the wind takes up
 By snatches, and lets fall, to be forgotten; 1285
 No—they sank into me, the bounteous gift
 Of one whom time and nature had made wise,
 Gracing his doctrine with authority
 Which hostile spirits silently allow;
 Of one accustomed to desires that feed 1290
 On fruitage gathered from the tree of life;
 To hopes on knowledge and experience built;
 Of one in whom persuasion and belief
 Had ripened into faith, and faith become
 A passionate intuition; whence the Soul, 1295
 Though bound to earth by ties of pity and love,
 From all injurious servitude was free.

The Sun, before his place of rest were reached,
 Had yet to travel far, but unto us,
 To us who stood low in that hollow dell, 1300
 He had become invisible,—a pomp
 Leaving behind of yellow radiance spread
 Over the mountain sides, in contrast bold
 With ample shadows, seemingly, no less
 Than those resplendent lights, his rich bequest;
 A dispensation of his evening power. 1306
 —Adown the path that from the glen had led
 The funeral train, the Shepherd and his Mate
 Were seen descending:—forth to greet them
 ran

Our little Page: the rustic pair approach; 1310
 And in the Matron's countenance may be read

Plain indication that the words, which told
How that neglected Pensioner was sent
Before his time into a quiet grave,
Had done to her humanity no wrong : 1315
But we are kindly welcomed—promptly served
With ostentatious zeal.—Along the floor
Of the small Cottage in the lonely Dell
A grateful couch was spread for our repose ;
Where, in the guise of mountaineers, we lay,
Stretched upon fragrant heath, and lulled by
 sound 1321
Of far-off torrents charming the still night,
And, to tired limbs and over-busy thoughts,
Inviting sleep and soft forgetfulness.

BOOK FIFTH.

THE PASTOR.

ARGUMENT.

Farewell to the Valley.—Reflections.—A large and populous Vale described.—The Pastor's Dwelling, and some account of him.—Church and Monuments.—The Solitary musing, and where.—Roused.—In the Churchyard the Solitary communicates the thoughts which had recently passed through his mind.—Lofty tone of the Wanderer's discourse of yesterday adverted to.—Rite of Baptism, and the professions accompanying it, contrasted with the real state of human life.—Apology for the Rite.—Inconsistency of the best men.—Acknowledgment that practice falls far below the injunctions of duty as existing in the mind.—General complaint of a falling off in the value of life after the time of youth.—Outward appearances of content and happiness in degree illusive.—Pastor approaches.—Appeal made to him.—His answer.—Wanderer in sympathy with him.—Suggestion that the least ambitious enquirers may be most free from error.—The Pastor is desired to give some portraits of the living or dead from his own observation of life among these Mountains—and for what purpose.—Pastor consents.—Mountain cottage.—Excellent qualities of its Inhabitants.—Solitary expresses his pleasure ; but denies the praise of virtue to worth of this kind.—Feelings of the Priest before he enters upon his account of persons interred in the Churchyard.—Graves of unbaptised Infants.—Funeral and sepulchral observances, whence.—Ecclesiastical Establishments, whence derived.—Profession of belief in the doctrine of Immortality.

THE PASTOR.

“FAREWELL, deep Valley, with thy one rude
House,
And its small lot of life-supporting fields,
And guardian rocks!—Farewell, attractive seat!
To the still influx of the morning light
Open, and day’s pure cheerfulness, but veiled 5
From human observation, as if yet
Primeval forests wrapped thee round with dark
Impenetrable shade ; once more farewell,
Majestic circuit, beautiful abyss,
By Nature destined from the birth of things 10
For quietness profound !”

Upon the side
Of that brown ridge, sole outlet of the vale
Which foot of boldest stranger would attempt,
Lingering behind my comrades, thus I breathed
A parting tribute to a spot that seemed 15
Like the fixed centre of a troubled world.
Again I halted with reverted eyes ;
The chain that would not slacken, was at length
Snapt,—and, pursuing leisurely my way,
How vain, thought I, is it by change of place 20
To seek that comfort which the mind denies ;
Yet trial and temptation oft are shunned
Wisely ; and by such tenure do we hold,
Frail life’s possessions, that even they whose
fate
Yields no peculiar reason of complaint 25

Might, by the promise that is here, be won
 To steal from active duties, and embrace
 Obscurity, and undisturbed repose.
 —Knowledge, methinks, in these disordered
 times,
 Should be allowed a privilege to have 30
 Her anchorites, like piety of old ;
 Men, who, from faction sacred, and unstained
 By war, might, if so minded, turn aside
 Uncensured, and subsist, a scattered few
 Living to God and nature, and content 35
 With that communion. Consecrated be
 The spots where such abide ! But happier still
 The Man, whom, furthermore, a hope attends
 That meditation and research may guide
 His privacy to principles and powers 40
 Discovered or invented ; or set forth,
 Through his acquaintance with the ways of
 truth,
 In lucid order ; so that, when his course
 Is run, some faithful eulogist may say,
 He sought not praise, and praise did overlook 45
 His unobtrusive merit ; but his life,
 Sweet to himself, was exercised in good
 That shall survive his name and memory.

Acknowledgments of gratitude sincere
 Accompanied these musings ; fervent thanks 50
 For my own peaceful lot and happy choice ;
 A choice that from the passions of the world
 Withdrew, and fixed me in a still retreat ;
 Sheltered, but not to social duties lost,
 Secluded, but not buried ; and with song 55
 Cheering my days, and with industrious thought ;
 With the ever-welcome company of books ;
 With virtuous friendship's soul-sustaining aid,
 And with the blessings of domestic love.

Thus occupied in mind I paced along, 60
Following the rugged road, by sledge or wheel
Worn in the moorland, till I overtook
My two Associates, in the morning sunshine
Halting together on a rocky knoll,
Whence the bare road descended rapidly 65
To the green meadows of another vale.

Here did our pensive Host put forth his hand
In sign of farewell. "Nay," the old Man said,
"The fragrant air its coolness still retains ;
The herds and flocks are yet abroad to crop 70
The dewy grass ; you cannot leave us now,
We must not part at this inviting hour."
He yielded, though reluctant ; for his mind
Instinctively disposed him to retire
To his own covert ; as a billow, heaved 75
Upon the beach, rolls back into the sea.
—So we descend : and winding round a rock
Attain a point that showed the valley—stretched
In length before us ; and, not distant far,
Upon a rising ground a grey church-tower, 80
Whose battlements were screened by tufted
trees.

And towards a crystal Mere, that lay beyond
Among steep hills and woods embosomed, flowed
A copious stream with boldly-winding course ;
Here traceable, there hidden—there again 85
To sight restored, and glittering in the sun.
On the stream's bank, and every where, appeared
Fair dwellings, single, or in social knots ;
Some scattered o'er the level, others perched
On the hill sides, a cheerful quiet scene, 90
Now in its morning purity arrayed.

"As 'mid some happy valley of the Alps,"
Said I, "once happy, ere tyrannic power,

Wantonly breaking in upon the Swiss,
 Destroyed their unoffending commonwealth, 95
 A popular equality reigns here,
 Save for yon stately House beneath whose roof
 A rural lord might dwell."—"No feudal pomp,
 Or power," replied the Wanderer, "to that
 House

Belongs, but there in his allotted Home 100
 Abides, from year to year, a genuine Priest,
 The shepherd of his flock ; or, as a king
 Is styled, when most affectionately praised,
 The father of his people. Such is he ; 104
 And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice
 Under his spiritual sway. He hath vouchsafed
 To me some portion of a kind regard ;
 And something also of his inner mind
 Hath he imparted—but I speak of him
 As he is known to all.

 The calm delights 110
 Of unambitious piety he chose,
 And learning's solid dignity ; though born
 Of knightly race, nor wanting powerful friends.
 Hither, in prime of manhood, he withdrew
 From academic bowers. He loved the spot— 115
 Who does not love his native soil ?—he prized
 The ancient rural character, composed
 Of simple manners, feelings unsuppress'd
 And undisguised, and strong and serious
 thought ;

A character reflected in himself, 120
 With such embellishment as well beseems
 His rank and sacred function. This deep vale
 Winds far in reaches hidden from our sight,
 And one a turreted manorial hall
 Adorns, in which the good Man's ancestors 125
 Have dwelt through ages—Patrons of this Cure.
 To them, and to his own judicious pains,

The Vicar's dwelling, and the whole domain,
Owes that presiding aspect which might well
Attract your notice ; statelier than could else 130
Have been bestowed, through course of common
 chance,
On an unwealthy mountain Benefice."

This said, oft pausing, we pursued our way ;
Nor reached the village-churchyard till the sun
Travelling at steadier pace than ours, had risen
Above the summits of the highest hills, 136
And round our path darted oppressive beams.

As chanced, the portals of the sacred Pile
Stood open ; and we entered. On my frame,
At such transition from the fervid air, 140
A grateful coolness fell, that seemed to strike
The heart, in concert with that temperate awe
And natural reverence which the place inspired.
Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy ; for duration built ; 145
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters intricately crossed,
Like leafless underboughs, in some thick wood,
All withered by the depth of shade above.
Admonitory texts inscribed the walls, 150
Each, in its ornamental scroll, enclosed ;
Each also crowned with winged heads—a pair
Of rudely-painted Cherubim. The floor
Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,
Was occupied by oaken benches ranged 155
In seemly rows ; the chancel only showed
Some vain distinctions, marks of earthly state
By immemorial privilege allowed ;
Though with the Encincture's special sanctity
But ill according. An heraldic shield, 160
Varying its tincture with the changeful light,

Imbued the altar-window ; fixed aloft
 A faded hatchment hung, and one by time
 Yet undiscoloured. A capacious pew
 Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery
 lined ; 165
 And marble monuments were here displayed
 Thronging the walls ; and on the floor beneath
 Sepulchral stones appeared, with emblems
 graven
 And foot-worn epitaphs, and some with small
 And shining effigies of brass inlaid. 170

The tribute by these various records claimed,
Duly we paid, each after each, and read
The ordinary chronicle of birth,
Office, alliance, and promotion—all
Ending in dust ; of upright magistrates, 175
Grave doctors strenuous for the mother-church,
And uncorrupted senators, alike
To king and people true. A brazen plate,
Not easily deciphered, told of one
Whose course of earthly honour was begun 180
In quality of page among the train
Of the eighth Henry, when he crossed the seas
His royal state to show, and prove his strength
In tournament, upon the fields of France.
Another tablet registered the death, 185
And praised the gallant bearing, of a Knight
Tried in the sea-fights of the second Charles.
Near this brave Knight his Father lay entombed ;
And, to the silent language giving voice,
I read,—how in his manhood's earlier day 190
He, 'mid the afflictions of intestine war
And rightful government subverted, found
One only solace—that he had espoused
A virtuous Lady tenderly beloved
For her benign perfections ; and yet more 195

Endeared to him, for this, that, in her state
 Of wedlock richly crowned with Heaven's regard,
 She with a numerous issue filled his house,
 Who throve, like plants, uninjured by the
 storm

That laid their country waste. No need to
 speak 200

Of less particular notices assigned
 To Youth or Maiden gone before their time,
 And Matrons and unwedded Sisters old ;
 Whose charity and goodness were rehearsed
 In modest panegyric.

“ These dim lines, 205
 What would they tell ? ” said I,—but, from the
 task

Of puzzling out that faded narrative,
 With whisper soft my venerable Friend
 Called me ; and, looking down the darksome
 aisle,

I saw the Tenant of the lonely vale 210
 Standing apart ; with curvèd arm reclined
 On the baptismal font ; his pallid face
 Upturned, as if his mind were rapt, or lost
 In some abstraction ;—gracefully he stood,
 The semblance bearing of a sculptured form 215
 That leans upon a monumental urn
 In peace, from morn to night, from year to year.

Him from that posture did the Sexton
 rouse ;
 Who entered, humming carelessly a tune,
 Continuation haply of the notes 220
 That had beguiled the work from which he
 came,
 With spade and mattock o'er his shoulder
 hung ;
 To be deposited, for future need,

In their appointed place. The pale Recluse
Withdrew; and straight we followed,—to a
spot

225

Where sun and shade were intermixed; for
there

A broad oak, stretching forth its leafy arms
From an adjoining pasture, overhung
Small space of that green churchyard with a
light

And pleasant awning. On the moss-grown wall
My ancient Friend and I together took 231
Our seats; and thus the Solitary spake,
Standing before us:—

“Did you note the mien
Of that self-solaced, easy-hearted churl,
Death’s hireling, who scoops out his neighbour’s
grave,

235

Or wraps an old acquaintance up in clay,
All unconcerned as he would bind a sheaf,
Or plant a tree. And did you hear his voice?
I was abruptly summoned by the sound
From some affecting images and thoughts, 240
Which then were silent; but crave utterance
now.

“Much,” he continued, with dejected look,
 “Much, yesterday, was said in glowing phrase
 Of our sublime dependencies, and hopes
 For future states of being; and the wings 245
 Of speculation, joyfully outspread,
 Hovered above our destiny on earth :
 But stoop, and place the prospect of the soul
 In sober contrast with reality, 249
 And man’s substantial life. If this mute earth
 Of what it holds could speak, and every grave
 Were as a volume, shut, yet capable
 Of yielding its contents to eye and ear,

We should recoil, stricken with sorrow and
 shame,
 To see disclosed, by such dread proof, how ill 255
 That which is done accords with what is known
 To reason, and by conscience is enjoined ;
 How idly, how perversely, life's whole course,
 To this conclusion, deviates from the line,
 Or of the end stops short, proposed to all 260
 At her aspiring outset.

Mark the babe
 Not long accustomed to this breathing world ;
 One that hath barely learned to shape a smile,
 Though yet irrational of soul, to grasp
 With tiny finger—to let fall a tear ; 265
 And, as the heavy cloud of sleep dissolves,
 To stretch his limbs, bemocking, as might seem,
 The outward functions of intelligent man ;
 A grave proficient in amusive feats
 Of puppetry, that from the lap declare 270
 His expectations, and announce his claims
 To that inheritance which millions rue
 That they were ever born to ! In due time
 A day of solemn ceremonial comes ;
 When they, who for this Minor hold in trust 275
 Rights that transcend the loftiest heritage
 Of mere humanity, present their Charge,
 For this occasion daintily adorned,
 At the baptismal font. And when the pure
 And consecrating element hath cleansed 280
 The original stain, the child is there received
 Into the second ark, Christ's church, with trust
 That he, from wrath redeemed, therein shall
 float

Over the billows of this troublesome world
 To the fair land of everlasting life. 285
 Corrupt affections, covetous desires,
 Are all renounced ; high as the thought of man

Can carry virtue, virtue is professed
 A dedication made, a promise given
 For due provision to control and guide, 290
 And unremitting progress to ensure
 In holiness and truth."

"You cannot blame,"
 Here interposing fervently I said,
 "Rites which attest that Man by nature lies
 Bedded for good and evil in a gulf 295
 Fearfully low; nor will your judgment scorn
 Those services, whereby attempt is made
 To lift the creature toward that eminence
 On which, now fallen, erewhile in majesty
 He stood; or if not so, whose top serene 300
 At least he feels 'tis given him to descry;
 Not without aspirations, evermore
 Returning, and injunctions from within
 Doubt to cast off and weariness; in trust
 That what the Soul perceives, if glory lost, 305
 May be, through pains and persevering hope,
 Recovered; or, if hitherto unknown,
 Lies within reach, and one day shall be gained."

"I blame them not," he calmly answered—

"no;

The outward ritual and established forms 310
 With which communities of men invest
 These inward feelings, and the aspiring vows
 To which the lips give public utterance
 Are both a natural process; and by me
 Shall pass uncensured; though the issue prove,
 Bringing from age to age its own reproach, 316
 Incongruous, impotent, and blank.—But, oh!
 If to be weak is to be wretched—miserable,
 As the lost Angel by a human voice
 Hath mournfully pronounced, then, in my mind,
 Far better not to move at all than move 321

By impulse sent from such illusive power,—
 That finds and cannot fasten down ; that grasps
 And is rejoiced, and loses while it grasps ;
 That tempts, emboldens—for a time sustains,
 And then betrays ; accuses and inflicts 326
 Remorseless punishment ; and so retreads
 The inevitable circle: better far
 Than this, to graze the herb in thoughtless
 peace, 329
 By foresight or remembrance undisturbed !

“Philosophy ! and thou more vaunted name
 Religion ! with thy statelier retinue,
 Faith, Hope, and Charity—from the visible
 world

Choose for your emblems whatsoe'er ye find
 Of safest guidance or of firmest trust— 335
 The torch, the star, the anchor ; nor except
 The cross itself, at whose unconscious feet
 The generations of mankind have knelt
 Ruefully seized, and shedding bitter tears,
 And through that conflict seeking rest—of
 you, 340

High-titled Powers, am I constrained to ask,
 Here standing, with the unvoyageable sky
 In faint reflection of infinitude
 Stretched overhead, and at my pensive feet
 A subterraneous magazine of bones, 345
 In whose dark vaults my own shall soon be laid,
 Where are your triumphs ? your dominion
 where ?

And in what age admitted and confirmed ?
 —Not for a happy land do I enquire,
 Island or grove, nor hides a blessed few, 350
 Who, with obedience willing and sincere,
 To your serene authorities conform ;
 But whom, I ask, of individual Souls,

Have ye withdrawn from passion's crooked
ways,

Inspired, and thoroughly fortified?—If the
heart 355

Could be inspected to its inmost folds
By sight undazzled with the glare of praise,
Who shall be named—in the resplendent line
Of sages, martyrs, confessors—the man
Whom the best might of faith, wherever fix'd,
For one day's little compass, has preserved 361
From painful and discreditable shocks
Of contradiction, from some vague desire
Culpably cherished, or corrupt relapse
To some unsanctioned fear?"

“If this be so, 365
And Man,” said I, “be in his noblest shape
Thus pitiably infirm; then, he who made,
And who shall judge the creature, will forgive.
—Yet, in its general tenor, your complaint
Is all too true; and surely not misplaced: 370
For, from this pregnant spot of ground, such
thoughts

Rise to the notice of a serious mind
By natural exhalation. With the dead
In their repose, the living in their mirth,
Who can reflect, unmoved, upon the round 375
Of smooth and solemnized complacencies,
By which, on Christian lands, from age to age
Profession mocks performance. Earth is sick,
And Heaven is weary, of the hollow words
Which States and Kingdoms utter when they
talk 380

Of truth and justice. Turn to private life
And social neighbourhood; look we to our-
selves;

A light of duty shines on every day
For all; and yet how few are warmed or cheered!

How few who mingle with their fellow-men 385
 And still remain self-governed, and apart,
 Like this our honoured Friend; and thence
 acquire
 Right to expect his vigorous decline,
 That promises to the end a blest old age!"

“Yet,” with a smile of triumph thus ex-
 claimed 390
 The Solitary, “in the life of man,
 If to the poetry of common speech
 Faith may be given, we see as in a glass
 A true reflection of the circling year, 394
 With all its seasons. Grant that Spring is there,
 In spite of many a rough untoward blast,
 Hopeful and promising with buds and flowers;
 Yet where is glowing Summer’s long rich day,
 That *ought* to follow faithfully expressed?
 And mellow Autumn, charged with bounteous
 fruit, 400
 Where is she imaged? in what favoured clime
 Her lavish pomp, and ripe magnificence?
 —Yet, while the better part is missed, the worse
 In man’s autumnal season is set forth
 With a resemblance not to be denied, 405
 And that contents him; bowers that hear no
 more
 The voice of gladness, less and less supply
 Of outward sunshine and internal warmth;
 And, with this change, sharp air and falling
 leaves,
 Foretelling aged Winter’s desolate sway. 410

“How gay the habitations that bedeck
 This fertile valley! Not a house but seems
 To give assurance of content within;
 Embosomed happiness, and placid love;

As if the sunshine of the day were met 415
 With answering brightness in the hearts of all
 Who walk this favoured ground. But chance-
 regards,
 And notice forced upon incurious ears ;
 These, if these only, acting in despite
 Of the encomiums by my Friend pronounced 420
 On humble life, forbid the judging mind
 To trust the smiling aspect of this fair
 And noiseless commonwealth. The simple race
 Of mountaineers (by nature's self removed
 From foul temptations, and by constant care
 Of a good shepherd tended, as themselves 426
 Do tend their flocks) partake man's general lot
 With little mitigation. They escape,
 Perchance, the heavier woes of guilt ; feel not
 The tedium of fantastic idleness : 430
 Yet life, as with the multitude, with them
 Is fashioned like an ill-constructed tale ;
 That on the outset wastes its gay desires,
 Its fair adventures, its enlivening hopes, 434
 And pleasant interests—for the sequel leaving
 Old things repeated with diminished grace ;
 And all the laboured novelties at best
 Imperfect substitutes, whose use and power
 Evince the want and weakness whence they
 spring."

While in this serious mood we held discourse,
 The reverend Pastor toward the church-yard
 gate 441
 Approached ; and, with a mild respectful air
 Of native cordiality, our Friend
 Advanced to greet him. With a gracious mien
 Was he received, and mutual joy prevailed. 445
 Awhile they stood in conference, and I guess
 That he, who now upon the mossy wall

Sate by my side, had vanished, if a wish
 Could have transferred him to the flying clouds,
 Or the least penetrable hiding-place 450
 In his own valley's rocky guardianship.

—For me, I looked upon the pair, well pleased :
 Nature had framed them both, and both were
 marked

By circumstance, with intermixture fine
 Of contrast and resemblance. To an oak 455
 Hardy and grand, a weather-beaten oak,
 Fresh in the strength and majesty of age,
 One might be likened : flourishing appeared,
 Though somewhat past the fulness of his prime,
 The other—like a stately sycamore, 460
 That spreads, in gentle pomp, its honied shade.

A general greeting was exchanged ; and soon
 The Pastor learned that his approach had given
 A welcome interruption to discourse
 Grave, and in truth too often sad.—“Is Man
 A child of hope? Do generations press 466
 On generations, without progress made?
 Halts the individual, ere his hairs be grey,
 Perforce? Are we a creature in whom good
 Preponderates, or evil? Doth the will 470
 Acknowledge reason's law? A living power
 Is virtue, or no better than a name,
 Fleeting as health or beauty, and unsound?
 So that the only substance which remains,
 (For thus the tenor of complaint hath run) 475
 Among so many shadows, are the pains
 And penalties of miserable life,
 Doomed to decay, and then expire in dust!
 —Our cogitations this way have been drawn,
 These are the points,” the Wanderer said, “on
 which 480
 Our inquest turns.—Accord, good Sir! the light

Of your experience to dispel this gloom :
 By your persuasive wisdom shall the heart
 That frets, or languishes, be stilled and
 cheered."

"Our nature," said the Priest, in mild reply,
 "Angels may weigh and fathom: they per-
 ceive, 486

With undistempered and unclouded spirit,
 The object as it is; but, for ourselves,
 That speculative height *we* may not reach.
 The good and evil are our own; and we 490
 Are that which we would contemplate from far.
 Knowledge, for us, is difficult to gain—
 Is difficult to gain, and hard to keep—
 As virtue's self; like virtue is beset 494
 With snares; tried, tempted, subject to decay.
 Love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate,
 Blind were we without these: through these
 alone

Are capable to notice or discern
 Or to record; we judge, but cannot be 499
 Indifferent judges. 'Spite of proudest boast,
 Reason, best reason, is to imperfect man
 An effort only, and a noble aim;
 A crown, an attribute of sovereign power,
 Still to be courted—never to be won. 504
 —Look forth, or each man dive into himself;
 What sees he but a creature too perturbed;
 That is transported to excess; that yearns,
 Regrets, or trembles, wrongly, or too much;
 Hopes rashly, in disgust as rash recoils;
 Battens on spleen, or moulders in despair? 510
 Thus comprehension fails, and truth is missed;
 Thus darkness and delusion round our path
 Spread, from disease, whose subtle injury lurks
 Within the very faculty of sight.

“ Yet for the general purposes of faith 515
In Providence, for solace and support,
We may not doubt that who can best subject
The will to reason’s law, can strictliest live
And act in that obedience, he shall gain
The clearest apprehension of those truths, 520
Which unassisted reason’s utmost power
Is too infirm to reach. But, waiving this,
And our regards confining within bounds
Of less exalted consciousness, through which
The very multitude are free to range, 525
We safely may affirm that human life
Is either fair and tempting, a soft scene
Grateful to sight, refreshing to the soul,
Or a forbidden tract of cheerless view ; 529
Even as the same is looked at, or approached.
Thus, when in changeful April fields are white
With new-fallen snow, if from the sullen north
Your walk conduct you hither, ere the sun
Hath gained his noontide height, this church-
yard, filled
With mounds transversely lying side by side
From east to west, before you will appear 536
An unillumined, blank, and dreary, plain,
With more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom
Saddening the heart. Go forward, and look
back ;
Look, from the quarter whence the lord of
light, 540
Of life, of love, and gladness doth dispense
His beams ; which, unexcluded in their fall,
Upon the southern side of every grave
Have gently exercised a melting power ;
Then will a vernal prospect greet your eye, 545
All fresh and beautiful, and green and bright,
Hopeful and cheerful :—vanished is the pall
That overspread and chilled the sacred turf,

This, in the lonely dell discoursing, you
 Declared at large ; and by what exercise
 From visible nature, or the inner self
 Power may be trained, and renovation brought
 To those who need the gift. But, after all, 586
 Is aught so certain as that man is doomed
 To breathe beneath a vault of ignorance ?
 The natural roof of that dark house in which
 His soul is pent ! How little can be known— 590
 This is the wise man's sigh ; how far we err—
 This is the good man's not unfrequent pang !
 And they perhaps err least, the lowly class
 Whom a benign necessity compels
 To follow reason's least ambitious course ; 595
 Such do I mean who, unperplexed by doubt,
 And unincited by a wish to look
 Into high objects farther than they may,
 Pace to and fro, from morn till even-tide,
 The narrow avenue of daily toil 600
 For daily bread."

" Yes," buoyantly exclaimed
 The pale Recluse—"praise to the sturdy plough,
 And patient spade ; praise to the simple crook,
 And ponderous loom—resounding while it holds
 Body and mind in one captivity ; 605
 And let the light mechanic tool be hailed
 With honour ; which, encasing by the power
 Of long companionship, the artist's hand,
 Cuts off that hand, with all its world of nerves,
 From a too busy commerce with the heart ! 610
 —Inglorious implements of craft and toil,
 Both ye that shape and build, and ye that force,
 By slow solicitation, earth to yield
 Her annual bounty, sparingly dealt forth
 With wise reluctance ; you would I extol, 615
 Not for gross good alone which ye produce,
 But for the impertinent and ceaseless strife

Of proofs and reasons ye preclude—in those
 Who to your dull society are born, 619
 And with their humble birthright rest content.
 —Would I had ne'er renounced it!”

A slight flush
 Of moral anger previously had tinged
 The old Man's cheek; but, at this closing turn
 Of self-reproach, it passed away. Said he,
 “That which we feel we utter; as we think 625
 So have we argued; reaping for our pains
 No visible recompense. For our relief
 You,” to the Pastor turning thus he spake,
 “Have kindly interposed. May I entreat
 Your further help? The mine of real life 630
 Dig for us; and present us, in the shape
 Of virgin ore, that gold which we, by pains
 Fruitless as those of æry alchemists,
 Seek from the torturing crucible. There lies
 Around us a domain where you have long 635
 Watched both the outward course and inner
 heart:

Give us, for our abstractions, solid facts;
 For our disputes, plain pictures. Say what man
 He is who cultivates yon hanging field; 639
 What qualities of mind she bears, who comes,
 For morn and evening service, with her pail,
 To that green pasture; place before our sight
 The family who dwell within yon house
 Fenced round with glittering laurel; or in that
 Below, from which the curling smoke ascends.
 Or rather, as we stand on holy earth, 646
 And have the dead around us, take from them
 Your instances; for they are both best known,
 And by frail man most equitably judged.
 Epitomise the life; pronounce, you can, 650
 Authentic epitaphs on some of these
 Who, from their lowly mansions hither brought,

Beneath this turf lie mouldering at our feet :
 So, by your records, may our doubts be solved
 And so, not searching higher, we may learn 655
To prize the breath we share with human kind ;
And look upon the dust of man with awe."

The Priest replied—" An office you impose
 For which peculiar requisites are mine ;
 Yet much, I feel, is wanting—else the task 660
 Would be most grateful. True indeed it is
 That they whom death has hidden from our
 sight

Are worthiest of the mind's regard ; with these
 The future cannot contradict the past :
 Mortality's last exercise and proof 665
 Is undergone ; the transit made that shows
 The very Soul, revealed as she departs.
 Yet, on your first suggestion, will I give,
 Ere we descend into these silent vaults,
 One picture from the living.

You behold, 670

High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark
 With stony barrenness, a shining speck
 Bright as a sunbeam sleeping till a shower
 Brush it away, or cloud pass over it ;
 And such it might be deemed—a sleeping sun-
 beam ; 675

But 'tis a plot of cultivated ground,
 Cut off, an island in the dusky waste ;
 And that attractive brightness is its own.
 The lofty sight, by nature framed to tempt
 Amid a wilderness of rocks and stones 680
 The tiller's hand, a hermit might have chosen,
 For opportunity presented, thence
 Far forth to send his wandering eye o'er land
 And ocean, and look down upon the works,
 The habitations, and the ways of men, 685

Himself unseen ! But no tradition tells
That ever hermit dipped his maple dish
In the sweet spring that lurks 'mid yon green
fields ;

And no such visionary views belong
To those who occupy and till the ground, 690
High on that mountain where they long have
dwelt

A wedded pair in childless solitude.

A house of stones collected on the spot,
By rude hands built, with rocky knolls in front,
Backed also by a ledge of rock, whose crest 695
Of birch-trees waves over the chimney top ;
A rough abode—in colour, shape, and size,
Such as in unsafe times of border-war
Might have been wished for and contrived, to
elude

The eye of roving plunderer—for their need 700
Suffices ; and unshaken bears the assault
Of their most dreaded foe, the strong South-
west

In anger blowing from the distant sea.

—Alone within her solitary hut ;

There, or within the compass of her fields, 705
At any moment may the Dame be found,
True as the stock-dove to her shallow nest

And to the grove that holds it. She beguiles

By intermingled work of house and field

The summer's day, and winter's ; with success
Not equal, but sufficient to maintain, 711

Even at the worst, a smooth stream of content,

Until the expected hour at which her Mate

From the far-distant quarry's vault returns ;

And by his converse crowns a silent day 715

With evening cheerfulness. In powers of mind,

In scale of culture, few among my flock

Hold lower rank than this sequestered pair :

But true humility descends from heaven ;
And that best gift of heaven hath fallen on
 them ;

720

Abundant recompense for every want.

—Stoop from your height, ye proud, and copy
 these !

Who, in their noiseless dwelling-place, can hear
The voice of wisdom whispering scripture texts
For the mind's government, or temper's peace ;
And recommending for their mutual need, 726
Forgiveness, patience, hope, and charity ! ”

“ Much was I pleased,” the grey-haired Wan-
 derer said,

“ When to those shining fields our notice first
You turned ; and yet more pleased have from
 your lips

730

Gathered this fair report of them who dwell
In that retirement ; whither, by such course
Of evil hap and good as oft awaits
A tired way-faring man, once *I* was brought
While traversing alone yon mountain pass. 735
Dark on my road the autumnal evening fell,
And night succeeded with unusual gloom,
So hazardous that feet and hands became
Guides better than mine eyes—until a light
High in the gloom appeared, too high, me-
 thought,

740

For human habitation ; but I longed
To reach it, destitute of other hope.
I looked with steadiness as sailors look
On the north star, or watch-tower's distant
 lamp,

And saw the light—now fixed—and shifting
 now—

745

Not like a dancing meteor, but in line
Of never-varying motion, to and fro.

It is no night-fire of the naked hills,
 Thought I—some friendly covert must be near.
 With this persuasion thitherward my steps 750
 I turn, and reach at last the guiding light;
 Joy to myself! but to the heart of her
 Who there was standing on the open hill,
 (The same kind Matron whom your tongue hath
 praised)

Alarm and disappointment! The alarm 755
 Ceased, when she learned through what mishap
 I came,

And by what help had gained those distant
 fields.

Drawn from her cottage, on that æry height,
 Bearing a lantern in her hand she stood,
 Or paced the ground—to guide her Husband
 home, 760

By that unwearied signal, kenned afar;
 An anxious duty! which the lofty site,
 Traversed but by a few irregular paths,
 Imposes, whensoever untoward chance
 Detains him after his accustomed hour 765
 Till night lies black upon the ground. 'But
 come,

Come,' said the Matron, 'to our poor abode;
 Those dark rocks hide it!' Entering, I beheld
 A blazing fire—beside a cleanly hearth 769
 Sate down; and to her office, with leave asked,
 The Dame returned.

Or ere that glowing pile
 Of mountain turf required the builder's hand
 Its wasted splendour to repair, the door
 Opened, and she re-entered with glad looks,
 Her Helpmate following. Hospitable fare, 775
 Frank conversation, made the evening's treat:
 Need a bewildered traveller wish for more?
 But more was given; I studied as we sate

By the bright fire, the good Man's form, and
face

Not less than beautiful; an open brow 780

Of undisturbed humanity; a cheek

Suffused with something of a feminine hue;

Eyes beaming courtesy and mild regard;

But, in the quicker turns of the discourse,

Expression slowly varying, that evinced 785

A tardy apprehension. From a fount

Lost, thought I, in the obscurities of time,

But honoured once, those features and that
mien

May have descended, though I see them here.

In such a man, so gentle and subdued, 790

Withal so graceful in his gentleness,

A race illustrious for heroic deeds,

Humbled, but not degraded, may expire.

This pleasing fancy (cherished and upheld

By sundry recollections of such fall . 795

From high to low, ascent from low to high,

As books record, and even the careless mind

Cannot but notice among men and things)

Went with me to the place of my repose.

“Roused by the crowing cock at dawn of
day, 800

I yet had risen too late to interchange

A morning salutation with my Host,

Gone forth already to the far-off seat

Of his day's work. ‘Three dark mid-winter
months

Pass,’ said the Matron, ‘and I never see, 805

Save when the sabbath brings its kind release,

My helpmate's face by light of day. He quits

His door in darkness, nor till dusk returns.

And, through Heaven's blessing, thus we gain
the bread

For which we pray; and for the wants provide
Of sickness, accident, and helpless age. 811

Companions have I many; many friends,
Dependants, comforters—my wheel, my fire,
All day the house-clock ticking in mine ear,
The cackling hen, the tender chicken brood, 815
And the wild birds that gather round my porch.
This honest sheep-dog's countenance I read;
With him can talk; nor blush to waste a word
On creatures less intelligent and shrewd.

And if the blustering wind that drives the
clouds

Care not for me, he lingers round my door,
And makes me pastime when our tempers
suit :—

But, above all, my thoughts are my support,
My comfort:—would that they were oftener
fixed

824

On what, for guidance in the way that leads
To heaven, I know, by my Redeemer taught.' The Matron ended—nor could I forbear
To exclaim—'O happy! yielding to the law
Of these privations, richer in the main!—
While thankless thousands are oppress'd and
clogged

By ease and leisure; by the very wealth
And pride of opportunity made poor;
While tens of thousands falter in their path,
And sink, through utter want of cheering light;
For you the hours of labour do not flag; 835
For you each evening hath its shining star,
And every sabbath-day its golden sun.' ”

“Yes!” said the Solitary with a smile
That seemed to break from an expanding heart,
“The untutored bird may found, and so con-
struct,

840

And with such soft materials line, her nest
Fixed in the centre of a prickly brake,
That the thorns wound her not; they only
guard.

Powers not unjustly likened to those gifts
Of happy instinct which the woodland bird 845
Shares with her species, nature's grace some-
times

Upon the individual doth confer,
Among her higher creatures born and trained
To use of reason. And, I own that, tired
Of the ostentatious world—a swelling stage 850
With empty actions and vain passions stuffed,
And from the private struggles of mankind
Hoping far less than I could wish to hope,
Far less than once I trusted and believed—
I love to hear of those, who, not contending 855
Nor summoned to contend for virtue's prize,
Miss not the humbler good at which they aim,
Blest with a kindly faculty to blunt
The edge of adverse circumstance, and turn
Into their contraries the petty plagues 860
And hindrances with which they stand beset.
In early youth, among my native hills,
I knew a Scottish Peasant who possessed
A few small crofts of stone-encumbered ground;
Masses of every shape and size, that lay 865
Scattered about under the mouldering walls
Of a rough precipice; and some, apart,
In quarters unobnoxious to such chance,
As if the moon had showered them down in
spite.

But he repined not. Though the plough was
scared 870

By these obstructions, 'round the shady stones
A fertilising moisture,' said the Swain,
'Gathers, and is preserved; and feeding dews

And damps, through all the drouhty summer
day

From out their substance issuing, maintain 875

Herbage that never fails: no grass springs up

So green, so fresh, so plentiful, as mine!'

But thinly sown these natures; rare, at least,

The mutual aptitude of seed and soil

That yields such kindly product. He, whose

bed

880

Perhaps yon loose sods cover, the poor Pen-

sioner

Brought yesterday from our sequestered dell

Here to lie down in lasting quiet, he,

If living now, could otherwise report

Of rustic loneliness: that grey-haired Orphan—

So call him, for humanity to him

886

No parent was—feelingly could have told,

In life, in death, what solitude can breed

Of selfishness, and cruelty, and vice;

Or, if it breed not, hath not power to cure. 890

—But your compliance, Sir! with our request

My words too long have hindered."

Undeterred,

Perhaps incited rather, by these shocks,

In no ungracious opposition given

To the confiding spirit of his own

895

Experienced faith, the reverend Pastor said,

Around him looking; "Where shall I begin?

Who shall be first selected from my flock

Gathered together in their peaceful fold?"

He paused—and having lifted up his eyes 900

To the pure heaven, he cast them down again

Upon the earth beneath his feet; and spake:—

"To a mysteriously-united pair

This place is consecrate; to Death and Life,

And to the best affections that proceed

905

From their conjunction ; consecrate to faith
 In him who bled for man upon the cross ;
 Hallowed to revelation ; and no less
 To reason's mandates ; and the hopes divine
 Of pure imagination ;—above all, 910
 To charity, and love, that have provided,
 Within these precincts, a capacious bed
 And receptacle, open to the good
 And evil, to the just and the unjust ;
 In which they find an equal resting-place : 915
 Even as the multitude of kindred brooks
 And streams, whose murmur fills this hollow
 vale,
 Whether their course be turbulent or smooth,
 Their waters clear or sullied, all are lost
 Within the bosom of yon crystal Lake, 920
 And end their journey in the same repose !

“ And blest are they who sleep ; and we that
 know,
 While in a spot like this we breathe and walk,
 That all beneath us by the wings are covered
 Of motherly humanity, outspread 925
 And gathering all within their tender shade,
 Though loth and slow to come ! A battle-field,
 In stillness left when slaughter is no more,
 With this compared, makes a strange spectacle !
 A dismal prospect yields the wild shore strewn
 With wrecks, and trod by feet of young and old
 Wandering about in miserable search 932
 Of friends or kindred, whom the angry sea
 Restores not to their prayer ! Ah ! who would
 think 934
 That all the scattered subjects which compose
 Earth's melancholy vision through the space
 Of all her climes—these wretched, these de-
 praved,

To virtue lost, insensible of peace,
From the delights of charity cut off,
To pity dead, the oppressor and the opprest;
Tyrants who utter the destroying word, 941
And slaves who will consent to be destroyed—
Were of one species with the sheltered few,
Who, with a dutiful and tender hand,
Lodged, in a dear appropriated spot, 945
This file of infants; some that never breathed
The vital air; others, which, though allowed
That privilege, did yet expire too soon,
Or with too brief a warning, to admit
Administration of the holy rite 950
That lovingly consigns the babe to the arms
Of Jesus, and his everlasting care.
These that in trembling hope are laid apart;
And the besprinkled nursling, unrequired
Till he begins to smile upon the breast 955
That feeds him; and the tottering little-one
Taken from air and sunshine when the rose
Of infancy first blooms upon his cheek;
The thinking, thoughtless, school-boy; the bold
youth
Of soul impetuous, and the bashful maid 960
Smitten while all the promises of life
Are opening round her; those of middle age,
Cast down while confident in strength they
stand,
Like pillars fixed more firmly, as might seem,
And more secure, by very weight of all 965
That, for support, rests on them; the decayed
And burthensome; and lastly, that poor few
Whose light of reason is with age extinct;
The hopeful and the hopeless, first and last,
The earliest summoned and the longest spared—
Are here deposited, with tribute paid 971
Various, but unto each some tribute paid;

As if, amid these peaceful hills and groves,
 Society were touched with kind concern,
 And gentle 'Nature grieved, that one should
 die;' 975

Or, if the change demanded no regret,
 Observed the liberating stroke—and blessed.

“And whence that tribute? wherefore these
 regards?

Not from the naked *Heart* alone of Man 979

(Though claiming high distinction upon earth

As the sole spring and fountain-head of tears,

His own peculiar utterance for distress

Or gladness)—No,” the philosophic Priest

Continued, “’tis not in the vital seat

Of feeling to produce them, without aid 985

From the pure soul, the soul sublime and pure;

With her two faculties of eye and ear,

The one by which a creature, whom his sins

Have rendered prone, can upward look to
 heaven;

The other that empowers him to perceive 990

The voice of Deity, on height and plain,

Whispering those truths in stillness, which the

WORD,

To the four quarters of the winds, proclaims.

Not without such assistance could the use

Of these benign observances prevail: 995

Thus are they born, thus fostered, thus main-
 tained;

And by the care prospective of our wise

Forefathers, who, to guard against the shocks,

The fluctuation and decay of things,

Embodied and established these high truths

In solemn institutions:—men convinced 1001

That life is love and immortality,

The being one, and one the element.

There lies the channel, and original bed, 1004
From the beginning, hollowed out and scooped
For Man's affections—else betrayed and lost,
And swallowed up 'mid deserts infinite!
This is the genuine course, the aim, and end
Of prescient reason ; all conclusions else
Are abject, vain, presumptuous, and perverse.
The faith partaking of those holy times, 1011
Life, I repeat, is energy of love
Divine or human ; exercised in pain,
In strife, in tribulation ; and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass, 1015
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy."

BOOK SIXTH.

THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE
MOUNTAINS.

ARGUMENT.

Poet's Address to the State and Church of England.
—The Pastor not inferior to the ancient Worthies of the Church.—He begins his Narratives with an instance of unrequited Love.—Anguish of mind subdued, and how.—The lonely Miner.—An instance of perseverance.—Which leads by contrast to an example of abused talents, irresolution, and weakness.—Solitary, applying this covertly to his own case, asks for an instance of some Stranger, whose dispositions may have led him to end his days here.—Pastor, in answer, gives an account of the harmonising influence of Solitude upon two men of opposite principles, who had encountered agitations in public life.—The rule by which Peace may be obtained expressed, and where.—Solitary hints at an overpowering Fatality.—Answer of the Pastor.—What subjects he will exclude from his Narratives.—Conversation upon this.—Instance of an unamiable character, a Female, and why given.—Contrasted with this, a meek sufferer, from unguarded and betrayed love.—Instance of heavier guilt, and its consequences to the Offender.—With this instance of a Marriage Contract broken is contrasted one of a Widower, evidencing his faithful affection towards his deceased wife by his care of their female Children.

THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

HAIL to the crown by Freedom shaped—to gird
An English Sovereign's brow! and to the
throne

Whereon he sits! Whose deep foundations lie
In veneration and the people's love;

Whose steps are equity, whose seat is law. 5

—Hail to the State of England! And conjoin
With this a salutation as devout,

Made to the spiritual fabric of her Church;

Founded in truth; by blood of Martyrdom

Cemented; by the hands of Wisdom reared 10

In beauty of holiness, with ordered pomp,

Decent and unreprieved. The voice, that greets

The majesty of both, shall pray for both;

That, mutually protected and sustained,

They may endure long as the sea surrounds 15

This favoured Land, or sunshine warms her soil.

And O, ye swelling hills, and spacious plains!
Besprent from shore to shore with steeple-
towers,

And spires whose "silent finger points to
heaven;"

Nor wanting, at wide intervals, the bulk 20

Of ancient minster lifted above the cloud

Of the dense air, which town or city breeds

To intercept the sun's glad beams—may ne'er
 That true succession fail of English hearts,
 Who, with ancestral feeling, can perceive 25
 What in those holy structures ye possess
 Of ornamental interest, and the charm
 Of pious sentiment diffused afar,
 And human charity, and social love.
 —Thus never shall the indignities of time 30
 Approach their reverend graces, unopposed ;
 Nor shall the elements be free to hurt
 Their fair proportions ; nor the blinder rage
 Of bigot zeal madly to overturn ;
 And, if the desolating hand of war 35
 Spare them, they shall continue to bestow,
 Upon the thronged abodes of busy men
 (Depraved, and ever prone to fill the mind
 Exclusively with transitory things)
 An air and mien of dignified pursuit ; 40
 Of sweet civility, on rustic wilds.

The Poet, fostering for his native land
 Such hope, entreats that servants may abound
 Of those pure altars worthy ; ministers
 Detached from pleasure, to the love of gain 45
 Superior, insusceptible of pride,
 And by ambitious longings undisturbed ;
 Men, whose delight is where their duty leads
 Or fixes them ; whose least distinguished day
 Shines with some portion of that heavenly
 lustre 50
 Which makes the sabbath lovely in the sight
 Of blessed angels, pitying human cares.
 —And, as on earth it is the doom of truth
 To be perpetually attacked by foes
 Open or covert, be that priesthood still, 55
 For her defence, replenished with a band
 Of strenuous champions, in scholastic arts

Thoroughly disciplined ; nor (if in course
 Of the revolving world's disturbances
 Cause should recur, which righteous Heaven
 avert ! 60

To meet such trial) from their spiritual sires
 Degenerate ; who, constrained to wield the
 sword

Of disputation, shrunk not, though assailed
 With hostile din, and combating in sight
 Of angry umpires, partial and unjust ; 65
 And did, thereafter, bathe their hands in fire,
 So to declare the conscience satisfied :
 Nor for their bodies would accept release ;
 But, blessing God and praising him, be-
 queathed

With their last breath, from out the smoulder-
 ing flame, 70

The faith which they by diligence had earned,
 Or, through illuminating grace, received,
 For their dear countrymen, and all mankind.
 O high example, constancy divine !

Even such a Man (inheriting the zeal 75
 And from the sanctity of elder times
 Not deviating,—a priest, the like of whom,
 If multiplied, and in their stations set,
 Would o'er the bosom of a joyful land
 Spread true religion and her genuine fruits) 80
 Before me stood that day ; on holy ground
 Fraught with the relics of mortality,
 Exalting tender themes, by just degrees
 To lofty raised ; and to the highest, last ;
 The head and mighty paramount of truths,— 85
 Immortal life, in never-fading worlds,
 For mortal creatures, conquered and secured.

That basis laid, those principles of faith

Announced, as a preparatory act
 Of reverence done to the spirit of the place, 90
 The Pastor cast his eyes upon the ground ;
 Not, as before, like one oppressed with awe,
 But with a mild and social cheerfulness ;
 Then to the Solitary turned, and spake.

“ At morn or eve, in your retired domain, 95
 Perchance you not unfrequently have marked
 A Visitor—in quest of herbs and flowers ;
 Too delicate employ, as would appear,
 For one, who, though of drooping mien, had yet
 From nature’s kindness received a frame 100
 Robust as ever rural labour bred.”

The Solitary answered : “ Such a Form
 Full well I recollect. We often crossed
 Each other’s path ; but, as the Intruder seemed
 Fondly to prize the silence which he kept, 105
 And I as willingly did cherish mine,
 We met, and passed, like shadows. I have
 heard,
 From my good Host, that being crazed in brain
 By unrequited love, he scaled the rocks, 109
 Dived into caves, and pierced the matted woods,
 In hope to find some virtuous herb of power
 To cure his malady !”

The Vicar smiled,—
 “ Alas ! before to-morrow’s sun goes down
 His habitation will be here : for him
 That open grave is destined.”

“ Died he then 115
 Of pain and grief ?” the Solitary asked,
 “ Do not believe it ; never could that be !”

“ He loved,” the Vicar answered, “ deeply
 loved,

Loved fondly, truly, fervently ; and dared
 At length to tell his love, but sued in vain ; 120
 Rejected, yea repelled ; and, if with scorn
 Upon the haughty maiden's brow, 'tis but
 A high-prized plume which female Beauty
 wears

In wantonness of conquest, or puts on
 To cheat the world, or from herself to hide 125
 Humiliation, when no longer free.

That he could brook, and glory in ;—but when
 The tidings came that she whom he had wooed
 Was wedded to another, and his heart
 Was forced to rend away its only hope ; 130
 Then, Pity could have scarcely found on earth
 An object worthier of regard than he,
 In the transition of that bitter hour !

Lost was she, lost ; nor could the Sufferer say
 That in the act of preference he had been 135
 Unjustly dealt with ; but the Maid was gone !
 Had vanished from his prospects and desires ;
 Not by translation to the heavenly choir
 Who have put off their mortal spoils—ah no !
 She lives another's wishes to complete,— 140
 ' Joy be their lot, and happiness,' he cried,
 ' His lot and hers, as misery must be mine !'

“ Such was that strong concussion ; but the
 Man,
 Who trembled, trunk and limbs, like some
 huge oak
 By a fierce tempest shaken, soon resumed 145
 The steadfast quiet natural to a mind
 Of composition gentle and sedate,
 And, in its movements, circumspect and slow.
 To books, and to the long-forsaken desk,
 O'er which enchained by science he had loved
 To bend, he stoutly re-addressed himself, 151

Resolved to quell his pain, and search for truth
 With keener appetite (if that might be)
 And closer industry. Of what ensued
 Within the heart no outward sign appeared 155
 Till a betraying sickliness was seen
 To tinge his cheek; and through his frame it
 crept

With slow mutation unconcealable;
 Such universal change as autumn makes
 In the fair body of a leafy grove 160
 Discoloured, then divested.

'Tis affirmed

By poets skilled in nature's secret ways
 That Love will not submit to be controlled
 By mastery:—and the good Man lacked not
 friends

Who strove to instil this truth into his mind,
 A mind in all heart-mysteries unversed. 166
 'Go to the hills,' said one, 'remit a while
 This baneful diligence:—at early morn
 Court the fresh air, explore the heaths and
 woods;

And, leaving it to others to foretell, 170
 By calculations sage, the ebb and flow
 Of tides, and when the moon will be eclipsed,
 Do you, for your own benefit, construct
 A calendar of flowers, plucked as they blow
 Where health abides, and cheerfulness, and
 peace.' 175

The attempt was made;—'tis needless to report
 How hopelessly; but innocence is strong,
 And an entire simplicity of mind
 A thing most sacred in the eye of Heaven;
 That opens, for such sufferers, relief 180
 Within the soul, fountains of grace divine;
 And doth commend their weakness and disease
 To Nature's care, assisted in her office

By all the elements that round her wait
 To generate, to preserve, and to restore; 185
 And by her beautiful array of forms
 Shedding sweet influence from above; or pure
 Delight exhaling from the ground they tread."

"Impute it not to impatience, if," exclaimed
 The Wanderer, "I infer that he was healed 190
 By perseverance in the course prescribed."

"You do not err: the powers, that had been
 lost
 By slow degrees, were gradually regained;
 The fluttering nerves composed; the beating
 heart
 In rest established; and the jarring thoughts
 To harmony restored.—But yon dark mould 196
 Will cover him, in the fulness of his strength,
 Hastily smitten by a fever's force;
 Yet not with stroke so sudden as refused
 Time to look back with tenderness on her 200
 Whom he had loved in passion; and to send
 Some farewell words—with one, but one,
 request;
 That, from his dying hand, she would accept
 Of his possessions that which most he prized;
 A book, upon whose leaves some chosen
 plants, 205
 By his own hand disposed with nicest care,
 In undecaying beauty were preserved;
 Mute register, to him, of time and place,
 And various fluctuations in the breast;
 To her, a monument of faithful love 210
 Conquered, and in tranquillity retained!

"Close to his destined habitation, lies
 One who achieved a humbler victory,

Though marvellous in its kind. A place there is
High in these mountains, that allured a band 215
Of keen adventurers to unite their pains
In search of precious ore: they tried, were
foiled—

And all desisted, all, save him alone.
He, taking counsel of his own clear thoughts,
And trusting only to his own weak hands, 220
Urged unremittingly the stubborn work,
Unseconded, uncountenanced; then, as time
Passed on, while still his lonely efforts found
No recompense, derided; and at length,
By many pitied, as insane of mind; 225
By others dreaded as the luckless thrall
Of subterranean Spirits feeding hope
By various mockery of sight and sound;
Hope after hope, encouraged and destroyed.
—But when the lord of seasons had matured 230
The fruits of earth through space of twice ten
years,

The mountain's entrails offered to his view
And trembling grasp the long-deferred reward.
Not with more transport did Columbus greet
A world, his rich discovery! But our Swain, 235
A very hero till his point was gained,
Proved all unable to support the weight
Of prosperous fortune. On the fields he looked
With an unsettled liberty of thought,
Wishes and endless schemes; by daylight
walked 240

Giddy and restless; ever and anon
Quaffed in his gratitude immoderate cups;
And truly might be said to die of joy!
He vanished; but conspicuous to this day 244
The path remains that linked his cottage-door
To the mine's mouth; a long and slanting track,
Upon the rugged mountain's stony side,

Worn by his daily visits to and from
 The darksome centre of a constant hope.
 This vestige, neither force of beating rain, 250
 Nor the vicissitudes of frost and thaw
 Shall cause to fade, till ages pass away ;
 And it is named, in memory of the event,
 The PATH OF PERSEVERANCE."

"Thou from whom
 Man has his strength," exclaimed the Wanderer,
 "oh ! 255

Do thou direct it ! To the virtuous grant
 The penetrative eye which can perceive
 In this blind world the guiding vein of hope ;
 That, like this Labourer, such may dig their
 way,
 'Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified ;' 260
 Grant to the wise *his* firmness of resolve !"

"That prayer were not superfluous," said
 the Priest,
 "Amid the noblest relics, proudest dust,
 That Westminster, for Britain's glory, holds
 Within the bosom of her awful pile, 265
 Ambitiously collected. Yet the sigh,
 Which wafts that prayer to heaven, is due to all,
 Wherever laid, who living fell below
 Their virtue's humbler mark ; a sigh of *pain*
 If to the opposite extreme they sank. 270
 How would you pity her who yonder rests ;
 Him, farther off ; the pair, who here are laid ;
 But, above all, that mixture of earth's mould
 Whom sight of this green hillock to my mind
 Recalls !

He lived not till his locks were nipped 275
 By seasonable frost of age ; nor died
 Before his temples, prematurely forced

To mix the manly brown with silver grey,
 Gave obvious instance of the sad effect 279
 Produced, when thoughtless Folly hath usurped
 The natural crown that sage Experience wears.
 Gay, volatile, ingenious, quick to learn,
 And prompt to exhibit all that he possessed
 Or could perform; a zealous actor, hired
 Into the troop of mirth, a soldier, sworn 285
 Into the lists of giddy enterprise—
 Such was he; yet, as if within his frame
 Two several souls alternately had lodged,
 Two sets of manners could the Youth put on;
 And, fraught with antics as the Indian bird 290
 That writhes and chatters in her wiry cage,
 Was graceful, when it pleased him, smooth and
 still

As the mute swan that floats adown the stream,
 Or, on the waters of the unruffled lake,
 Anchors her placid beauty. Not a leaf, 295
 That flutters on the bough, lighter than he;
 And not a flower, that droops in the green
 shade,

More winningly reserved! If ye inquire
 How such consummate elegance was bred
 Amid these wilds, this answer may suffice; 300
 'Twas Nature's will; who sometimes under-
 takes,

For the reproof of human vanity,
 Art to outstrip in her peculiar walk.
 Hence, for this Favourite—lavishly endowed
 With personal gifts, and bright instinctive
 wit, 305

While both, embellishing each other, stood
 Yet farther recommended by the charm
 Of fine demeanour, and by dance and song,
 And skill in letters—every fancy shaped
 Fair expectations; nor, when to the world's 310

Capacious field forth went the Adventurer,
there

Were he and his attainments overlooked,
Or scantily rewarded; but all hopes,
Cherished for him, he suffered to depart,
Like blighted buds; or clouds that mimicked
land 315

Before the sailor's eye; or diamond drops
That sparkling decked the morning grass; or
aught

That *was* attractive, and hath ceased to be!

“Yet, when this Prodigal returned, the rites
Of joyful greeting were on him bestowed, 320
Who, by humiliation undeterred,
Sought for his weariness a place of rest
Within his Father's gates.—Whence came
he?—clothed

In tattered garb, from hovels where abides
Necessity, the stationary host 325
Of vagrant poverty; from rifted barns
Where no one dwells but the wide-staring owl
And the owl's prey; from these bare haunts, to
which

He had descended from the proud saloon,
He came, the ghost of beauty and of health, 330
The wreck of gaiety! But soon revived
In strength, in power refitted, he renewed
His suit to Fortune; and she smiled again
Upon a fickle Ingrate. Thrice he rose,
Thrice sank as willingly. For he—whose
nerves 335

Were used to thrill with pleasure, while his
voice

Softly accompanied the tuneful harp,
By the nice finger of fair ladies touched
In glittering halls—was able to derive

No less enjoyment from an abject choice. 340
Who happier for the moment—who more blithe
Than this fallen Spirit ? in those dreary holds
His talents lending to exalt the freaks
Of merry-making beggars,—now, provoked
To laughter multiplied in louder peals 345
By his malicious wit ; then, all enchained
With mute astonishment, themselves to see
In their own arts outdone, their fame eclipsed,
As by the very presence of the Fiend
Who dictates and inspires illusive feats, 350
For knavish purposes ! The city, too,
(With shame I speak it) to her guilty bowers
Allured him, sunk so low in self-respect
As there to linger, there to eat his bread, 354
Hired minstrel of voluptuous blandishment ;
Charming the air with skill of hand or voice,
Listen who would, be wrought upon who
might,
Sincerely wretched hearts, or falsely gay.
—Such the too frequent tenor of his boast
In ears that relished the report ;—but all 360
Was from his Parents happily concealed ;
Who saw enough for blame and pitying love.
They also were permitted to receive
His last, repentant breath ; and closed his eyes,
No more to open on that irksome world 365
Where he had long existed in the state
Of a young fowl beneath one mother hatched,
Though from another sprung, different in kind :
Where he had lived, and could not cease to
live,
Distracted in propensity ; content 370
With neither element of good or ill ;
And yet in both rejoicing ; man unblest ;
Of contradictions infinite the slave,
Till his deliverance, when Mercy made him

One with himself, and one with them that
sleep.” 375

“’Tis strange,” observed the Solitary,
“strange

It seems, and scarcely less than pitiful,
That in a land where charity provides
For all that can no longer feed themselves,
A man like this should choose to bring his
shame 380

To the parental door; and with his sighs
Infect the air which he had freely breathed
In happy infancy. He could not pine
Through lack of converse; no—he must have
found

Abundant exercise for thought and speech, 385
In his dividual being, self-reviewed,
Self-catechised, self-punished.—Some there are
Who, drawing near their final home, and much
And daily longing that the same were reached,
Would rather shun than seek the fellowship 390
Of kindred mould.—Such haply here are laid?”

“Yes,” said the Priest, “the Genius of our
hills—

Who seems, by these stupendous barriers cast
Round his domain, desirous not alone
To keep his own, but also to exclude 395
All other progeny—doth sometimes lure,
Even by his studied depth of privacy,
The unhappy alien hoping to obtain
Concealment, or seduced by wish to find,
In place from outward molestation free, 400
Helps to internal ease. Of many such
Could I discourse; but as their stay was brief,
So their departure only left behind
Fancies, and loose conjectures. Other trace

Survives, for worthy mention, of a pair 405
 Who, from the pressure of their several fates,
 Meeting as strangers, in a petty town
 Whose blue roofs ornament a distant reach
 Of this far-winding vale, remained as friends
 True to their choice; and gave their bones in
 trust 410

To this loved cemetery, here to lodge
 With unescutcheoned privacy interred
 Far from the family vault.—A Chieftain one
 By right of birth; within whose spotless breast
 The fire of ancient Caledonia burned: 415
 He, with the foremost whose impatience hailed
 The Stuart, landing to resume, by force
 Of arms, the crown which bigotry had lost,
 Aroused his clan; and, fighting at their head,
 With his brave sword endeavoured to prevent
 Culloden's fatal overthrow. Escaped 421
 From that disastrous rout, to foreign shores
 He fled; and when the lenient hand of time
 Those troubles had appeased, he sought and
 gained,
 For his obscured condition, an obscure 425
 Retreat, within this nook of English ground.

“ The other, born in Britain's southern tract,
 Had fixed his milder loyalty, and placed
 His gentler sentiments of love and hate,
 There, where *they* placed them who in con-
 science prized 430

The new succession, as a line of kings
 Whose oath had virtue to protect the land
 Against the dire assaults of papacy
 And arbitrary rule. But launch thy bark
 On the distempered flood of public life, 435
 And cause for most rare triumph will be thine
 If, spite of keenest eye and steadiest hand,

The stream, that bears thee forward, prove not,
soon

Or late, a perilous master. He—who oft,
Beneath the battlements and stately trees 440
That round his mansion cast a sober gloom,
Had moralised on this, and other truths
Of kindred import, pleased and satisfied—
Was forced to vent his wisdom with a sigh
Heaved from the heart in fortune's bitterness,
When he had crushed a plentiful estate 446
By ruinous contest, to obtain a seat
In Britain's senate. Fruitless was the attempt:
And while the uproar of that desperate strife
Continued yet to vibrate on his ear, 450
The vanquished Whig, under a borrowed name,
(For the mere sound and echo of his own
Haunted him with sensations of disgust
That he was glad to lose) slunk from the
world 454

To the deep shade of those untravelled Wilds ;
In which the Scottish Laird had long possessed
An undisturbed abode. Here, then, they met,
Two doughty champions ; flaming Jacobite
And sullen Hanoverian ! You might think
That losses and vexations, less severe 460
Than those which they had severally sustained,
Would have inclined each to abate his zeal
For his ungrateful cause ; no,—I have heard
My reverend Father tell that, 'mid the calm
Of that small town encountering thus, they
filled, 465

Daily, its bowling-green with harmless strife ;
Plagued with uncharitable thoughts the church ;
And vexed the market-place. But in the
breasts

Of these opponents gradually was wrought,
With little change of general sentiment, 470

Such leaning towards each other, that their
 days
 By choice were spent in constant fellowship ;
 And if, at times, they fretted with the yoke,
 Those very bickerings made them love it more.

“ A favourite boundary to their lengthened
 walks 475
 This Church-yard was. And, whether they had
 come
 Treading their path in sympathy and linked
 In social converse, or by some short space
 Discreetly parted to preserve the peace,
 One spirit seldom failed to extend its sway 480
 Over both minds, when they awhile had
 marked
 The visible quiet of this holy ground,
 And breathed its soothing air ;—the spirit of
 hope
 And saintly magnanimity ; that—spurning
 The field of selfish difference and dispute, 485
 And every care which transitory things,
 Earth and the kingdoms of the earth, create—
 Doth, by a rapture of forgetfulness,
 Preclude forgiveness, from the praise debarred,
 Which else the Christian virtue might have
 claimed. 490

“ There live who yet remember here to have
 seen
 Their courtly figures, seated on the stump
 Of an old yew, their favourite resting-place.
 But as the remnant of the long-lived tree
 Was disappearing by a swift decay, 495
 They, with joint care, determined to erect,
 Upon its site, a dial, that might stand
 For public use preserved, and thus survive

As their own private monument: for this
 Was the particular spot, in which they wished
 (And Heaven was pleased to accomplish the
 desire) 501

That, undivided, their remains should lie.
 So, where the mouldered tree had stood, was
 raised

Yon structure, framing, with the ascent of
 steps

That to the decorated pillar lead, 505
 A work of art more sumptuous than might
 seem

To suit this place; yet built in no proud scorn
 Of rustic homeliness; they only aimed
 To ensure for it respectful guardianship.

Around the margin of the plate, whereon 510
 The shadow falls to note the stealthy hours,
 Winds an inscriptive legend."—At these words
 Thither we turned; and gathered, as we read,
 The appropriate sense, in Latin numbers
 couched:

*"Time flies; it is his melancholy task 515
 To bring, and bear away, delusive hopes,
 And re-produce the troubles he destroys.
 But, while his blindness thus is occupied,
 Discerning Mortal! do thou serve the will
 Of Time's eternal Master, and that peace, 520
 Which the world wants, shall be for thee con-
 firmed!"*

"Smooth verse, inspired by no unlettered
 Muse,"

Exclaimed the Sceptic, "and the strain of
 thought

Accords with nature's language;—the soft
 voice

Of yon white torrent falling down the rocks 525

Speaks, less distinctly, to the same effect.
If, then, their blended influence be not lost
Upon our hearts, not wholly lost, I grant,
Even upon mine, the more are we required
To feel for those among our fellow-men, 530
Who, offering no obeisance to the world,
Are yet made desperate by 'too quick a sense
Of constant infelicity,' cut off
From peace like exiles on some barren rock,
Their life's appointed prison; not more free 535
Than sentinels, between two armies, set,
With nothing better, in the chill night air,
Than their own thoughts to comfort them.

Say why

That ancient story of Prometheus chained
To the bare rock, on frozen Caucasus; 540
The vulture, the inexhaustible repast
Drawn from his vitals? Say what meant the
woes

By Tantalus entailed upon his race,
And the dark sorrows of the line of Thebes?
Fictions in form, but in their substance truths,
Tremendous truths! familiar to the men 546
Of long-past times, nor obsolete in ours.
Exchange the shepherd's frock of native grey
For robes with regal purple tinged; convert
The crook into a sceptre; give the pomp 550
Of circumstance; and here the tragic Muse
Shall find apt subjects for her highest art.
Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills,
The generations are prepared; the pangs, 554
The internal pangs, are ready; the dread strife
Of poor humanity's afflicted will
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny."

"Though," said the Priest in answer, "these
be terms

Which a divine philosophy rejects,
 We, whose established and unfailing trust 560
 Is in controlling Providence, admit
 That, through all stations, human life abounds
 With mysteries ;—for, if Faith were left un-
 tried,

How could the might, that lurks within her,
 then 564

Be shown ? her glorious excellence—that ranks
 Among the first of Powers and Virtues—
 proved ?

Our system is not fashioned to preclude
 That sympathy which you for others ask ;
 And I could tell, not travelling for my theme
 Beyond these humble graves, of grievous crimes
 And strange disasters ; but I pass them by, 571
 Loth to disturb what Heaven hath hushed in
 peace.

—Still less, far less, am I inclined to treat
 Of Man degraded in his Maker's sight
 By the deformities of brutish vice : 575

For, in such portraits, though a vulgar face
 And a coarse outside of repulsive life
 And unassuming manners might at once
 Be recognised by all—" Ah ! do not think,"
 The Wanderer somewhat eagerly exclaimed, 580
 " Wish could be ours that you, for such poor
 gain,

(Gain shall I call it ?—gain of what ?—for
 whom ?)

Should breathe a word tending to violate
 Your own pure spirit. Not a step we look
 for

In slight of that forbearance and reserve 585
 Which common human-heartedness inspires,
 And mortal ignorance and frailty claim,
 Upon this sacred ground, if nowhere else."

"True," said the Solitary, "be it far
 From us to infringe the laws of charity. 590
 Let judgment here in mercy be pronounced;
 This, self-respecting Nature prompts, and this
 Wisdom enjoins; but if the thing we seek
 Be genuine knowledge, bear we then in mind
 How, from his lofty throne, the sun can fling
 Colours as bright on exhalations bred 596
 By weedy pool or pestilential swamp,
 As by the rivulet sparkling where it runs,
 Or the pellucid lake."

"Small risk," said I,
 "Of such illusion do we here incur; 600
 Temptation here is none to exceed the truth;
 No evidence appears that they who rest
 Within this ground, were covetous of praise,
 Or of remembrance even, deserved or not.
 Green is the Church-yard, beautiful and green,
 Ridge rising gently by the side of ridge, 606
 A heaving surface, almost wholly free
 From interruption of sepulchral stones,
 And mantled o'er with aboriginal turf
 And everlasting flowers. These Dalesmen trust
 The lingering gleam of their departed lives 611
 To oral record, and the silent heart;
 Depositories faithful and more kind
 Than fondest epitaph: for, if those fail,
 What boots the sculptured tomb? And who
 can blame, 615
 Who rather would not envy, men that feel
 This mutual confidence; if, from such source,
 The practice flow,—if thence, or from a deep
 And general humility in death?
 Nor should I much condemn it, if it spring 620
 From disregard of time's destructive power,
 As only capable to prey on things
 Of earth, and human nature's mortal part.

“ Yet—in less simple districts, where we see
Stone lift its forehead emulous of stone 625
In courting notice ; and the ground all paved
With commendations of departed worth ;
Reading, where’er we turn, of innocent lives,
Of each domestic charity fulfilled,
And sufferings meekly borne—I, for my part,
Though with the silence pleased that here
prevails, 631

Among those fair recitals also range,
Soothed by the natural spirit which they breathe.
And, in the centre of a world whose soil
Is rank with all unkindness, compassed round
With such memorials, I have sometimes felt, 636
It was no momentary happiness
To have *one* Enclosure where the voice that
speaks

In envy or detraction is not heard ;
Which malice may not enter ; where the traces
Of evil inclinations are unknown ; 641
Where love and pity tenderly unite
With resignation ; and no jarring tone
Intrudes, the peaceful concert to disturb
Of amity and gratitude."

“Thus sanctioned,” 645
The Pastor said, “I willingly confine
My narratives to subjects that excite
Feelings with these accordant; love, esteem,
And admiration; lifting up a veil,
A sunbeam introducing among hearts 650
Retired and covert; so that ye shall have
Clear images before your gladdened eyes
Of nature’s unambitious underwood,
And flowers that prosper in the shade. And
when

I speak of such among my flock as swerved 655
Or fell, those only shall be singled out

Upon whose lapse, or error, something more
 Than brotherly forgiveness may attend;
 To such will we restrict our notice, else
 Better my tongue were mute.

And yet there are, 660
 I feel, good reasons why we should not leave
 Wholly untraced a more forbidding way.
 For, strength to persevere and to support,
 And energy to conquer and repel—
 These elements of virtue, that declare 665
 The native grandeur of the human soul—
 Are oft-times not unprofitably shown
 In the perverseness of a selfish course:
 Truth every day exemplified, no less
 In the grey cottage by the murmuring stream
 Than in fantastic conqueror's roving camp, 671
 Or 'mid the factious senate unappalled
 Whoe'er may sink, or rise—to sink again,
 As merciless proscription ebbs and flows.

“There,” said the Vicar, pointing as he
 spake, 675
 “A woman rests in peace; surpassed by few
 In power of mind, and eloquent discourse.
 Tall was her stature; her complexion dark
 And saturnine; her head not raised to hold
 Converse with heaven, nor yet deprest towards
 earth, 680
 But in projection carried, as she walked
 For ever musing. Sunken were her eyes;
 Wrinkled and furrowed with habitual thought
 Was her broad forehead; like the brow of
 one
 Whose visual nerve shrinks from a painful
 glare 685
 Of overpowering light.—While yet a child,
 She, 'mid the humble flowerets of the vale,

Towered like the imperial thistle, not unfurnished

With its appropriate grace, yet rather seeking
To be admired, than coveted and loved. 690

Even at that age she ruled, a sovereign queen,
Over her comrades ; else their simple sports,
Wanting all relish for her strenuous mind,
Had crossed her only to be shunned with scorn.
—Oh ! pang of sorrowful regret for those 695
Whom, in their youth, sweet study has enthralled,

That they have lived for harsher servitude,
Whether in soul, in body, or estate !
Such doom was hers ; yet nothing could subdue
Her keen desire of knowledge, nor efface 700
Those brighter images by books imprest
Upon her memory, faithfully as stars
That occupy their places, and, though oft
Hidden by clouds, and oft bedimmed by haze,
Are not to be extinguished, nor impaired. 705

“Two passions, both degenerate, for they
both

Began in honour, gradually obtained
Rule over her, and vexed her daily life ;
An unremitting, avaricious thrift ;
And a strange thralldom of maternal love, 710
That held her spirit, in its own despite,
Bound—by vexation, and regret, and scorn,
Constrained forgiveness, and relenting vows,
And tears, in pride suppressed, in shame concealed—

To a poor dissolute Son, her only child. 715
—Her wedded days had opened with mishap,
Whence dire dependence. What could she
perform

To shake the burthen off ? Ah ! there was felt,

Indignantly, the weakness of her sex. 719
 She mused, resolved, adhered to her resolve;
 The hand grew slack in alms-giving, the heart
 Closed by degrees to charity; heaven's blessing
 Not seeking from that source, she placed her
 trust

In ceaseless pains—and strictest parsimony
 Which sternly hoarded all that could be spared,
 From each day's need, out of each day's least
 gain. 726

“ Thus all was re-established, and a pile
 Constructed, that sufficed for every end,
 Save the contentment of the builder's mind;
 A mind by nature indisposed to aught 730
 So placid, so inactive, as content;
 A mind intolerant of lasting peace,
 And cherishing the pang her heart deplored.
 Dread life of conflict! which I oft compared
 To the agitation of a brook that runs 735
 Down a rocky mountain, buried now and lost
 In silent pools, now in strong eddies chained;
 But never to be charmed to gentleness:
 Its best attainment fits of such repose
 As timid eyes might shrink from fathoming. 740

“ A sudden illness seized her in the strength
 Of life's autumnal season.—Shall I tell
 How on her bed of death the Matron lay,
 To Providence submissive, so she thought;
 But fretted, vexed, and wrought upon, almost
 To anger, by the malady that griped 746
 Her prostrate frame with unrelaxing power,
 As the fierce eagle fastens on the lamb?
 She prayed, she moaned;—her husband's sister
 watched
 Her dreary pillow, waited on her needs; 750

And yet the very sound of that kind foot
 Was anguish to her ears! ‘And must she
 rule,’

This was the death-doomed Woman heard to
 say

In bitterness, ‘and must she rule and reign,
 Sole Mistress of this house, when I am gone?
 Tend what I tended, calling it her own!’ 756
 Enough;—I fear, too much.—One vernal even-
 ing,

While she was yet in prime of health and
 strength,

I well remember, while I passed her door
 Alone, with loitering step, and upward eye 760
 Turned towards the planet Jupiter that hung
 Above the centre of the Vale, a voice
 Roused me, her voice; it said, ‘That glorious
 star

In its untroubled element will shine
 As now it shines, when we are laid in earth 765
 And safe from all our sorrows.’ With a sigh
 She spake, yet, I believe, not unsustained
 By faith in glory that shall far transcend
 Aught by these perishable heavens disclosed
 To sight or mind. Nor less than care divine
 Is divine mercy. She, who had rebelled, 771
 Was into meekness softened and subdued;
 Did, after trials not in vain prolonged,
 With resignation sink into the grave;
 And her uncharitable acts, I trust, 775
 And harsh unkindnesses are all forgiven,
 Tho’, in this Vale, remembered with deep awe.”

THE Vicar paused; and toward a seat advanced,
 A long stone-seat, fixed in the Church-yard
 wall;

Part shaded by cool sycamore, and part 780
 Offering a sunny resting-place to them
 Who seek the House of worship, while the bells
 Yet ring with all their voices, or before
 The last hath ceased its solitary knoll.
 Beneath the shade we all sate down; and there
 His office, uninvited, he resumed. 786

“ As on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
 Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March,
 Screened by its parent, so that little mound
 Lies guarded by its neighbour; the small heap
 Speaks for itself; an Infant there doth rest; 791
 The sheltering hillock is the Mother's grave.
 If mild discourse, and manners that conferred
 A natural dignity on humblest rank;
 If gladsome spirits, and benignant looks, 795
 That for a face not beautiful did more
 Than beauty for the fairest face can do;
 And if religious tenderness of heart,
 Grieving for sin, and penitential tears
 Shed when the clouds had gathered and dis-
 tained 800
 The spotless ether of a maiden life;
 If these may make a hallowed spot of earth
 More holy in the sight of God or Man;
 Then, o'er that mould, a sanctity shall brood
 Till the stars sicken at the day of doom. 805

“ Ah! what a warning for a thoughtless man,
 Could field or grove, could any spot of earth,
 Show to his eye an image of the pangs
 Which it hath witnessed; render back an echo
 Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod! 810
 There, by her innocent Baby's precious grave,
 And on the very turf that roofs her own,
 The Mother oft was seen to stand, or kneel

In the broad day, a weeping Magdalene.

Now she is not ; the swelling turf reports 815

Of the fresh shower, but of poor Ellen's tears

Is silent; nor is any vestige left

Of the path worn by mournful tread of her

Who, at her heart's light bidding, once had
moved

In virgin fearlessness, with step that seemed 820

Caught from the pressure of elastic turf

Upon the mountains gemmed with morning
dew,

In the prime hour of sweetest scents and airs.

—Serious and thoughtful was her mind ; and yet,

By reconciliation exquisite and rare, 825

The form, port, motions, of this Cottage-girl

Were such as might have quickened and inspired

A Titian's hand, addrest to picture forth

Oread or Dryad glancing through the shade 829

What time the hunter's earliest horn is heard

Startling the golden hills.

A wide-spread elm

Stands in our valley, named THE JOYFUL TREE;

From dateless usage which our peasants hold

Of giving welcome to the first of May

By dances round its trunk.—And if the sky 835

Permit, like honours, dance and song, are paid

To the Twelfth Night, beneath the frosty stars

Or the clear moon. The queen of these gay
sports,

If not in beauty yet in sprightly air,

Was hapless Ellen.—No one touched the
ground 840

So deftly, and the nicest maiden's locks

Less gracefully were braided ;—but this praise,

Methinks, would better suit another place.

“She loved, and fondly deemed herself
beloved.

—The road is dim, the current unperceived, 845
The weakness painful and most pitiful,
By which a virtuous woman, in pure youth,
May be delivered to distress and shame.
Such fate was hers.—The last time Ellen
danced,

Among her equals, round THE JOYFUL TREE, 850
She bore a secret burthen; and full soon
Was left to tremble for a breaking vow,—
Then, to bewail a sternly-broken vow,
Alone, within her widowed Mother's house.
It was the season of unfolding leaves, 855
Of days advancing toward their utmost length,
And small birds singing happily to mates
Happy as they. With spirit-saddening power
Winds pipe through fading woods; but those
blithe notes

Strike the deserted to the heart; I speak 860
Of what I know, and what we feel within.
—Beside the cottage in which Ellen dwelt
Stands a tall ash-tree; to whose topmost
twig

A thrush resorts, and annually chants,
At morn and evening from that naked perch, 865
While all the undergrove is thick with leaves,
A time-beguiling ditty, for delight
Of his fond partner, silent in the nest.
—‘Ah why,’ said Ellen, sighing to herself,
‘Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn
pledge, 870

And nature that is kind in woman's breast,
And reason that in man is wise and good,
And fear of him who is a righteous judge;
Why do not these prevail for human life,
To keep two hearts together, that began 875

Their spring-time with one love, and that have
need

Of mutual pity and forgiveness, sweet
To grant, or be received ; while that poor bird—
O come and hear him ! Thou who hast to me
Been faithless, hear him, though a lowly
creature, 880

One of God's simple children that yet know not
The universal Parent, how he sings
As if he wished the firmament of heaven
Should listen, and give back to him the voice
Of his triumphant constancy and love ; 885
The proclamation that he makes, how far
His darkness doth transcend our fickle light !'

“ Such was the tender passage, not by me
Repeated without loss of simple phrase,
Which I perused, even as the words had been
Committed by forsaken Ellen's hand 891
To the blank margin of a Valentine,
Bedropped with tears. 'Twill please you to be
told

That, studiously withdrawing from the eye
Of all companionship, the Sufferer yet 895
In lonely reading found a meek resource :
How thankful for the warmth of summer days,
When she could slip into the cottage-barn,
And find a secret oratory there ;
Or, in the garden, under friendly veil 900
Of their long twilight, pore upon her book
By the last lingering help of the open sky
Until dark night dismissed her to her bed !
Thus did a waking fancy sometimes lose
The unconquerable pang of despised love. 905

“ A kindlier passion opened on her soul
When that poor Child was born. Upon its face

She gazed as on a pure and spotless gift
 Of unexpected promise, where a grief
 Or dread was all that had been thought of,—

joy

910

Far livelier than bewildered traveller feels,
 Amid a perilous waste that all night long
 Hath harassed him toiling through fearful storm,
 When he beholds the first pale speck serene
 Of day-spring, in the gloomy east, revealed, 915
 And greets it with thanksgiving. 'Till this
 hour,'

Thus, in her Mother's hearing Ellen spake,
 'There was a stony region in my heart;
 But He, at whose command the parchèd rock
 Was smitten, and poured forth a quenching
 stream,

920

Hath softened that obduracy, and made
 Unlooked-for gladness in the desert place,
 To save the perishing; and, henceforth, I
 breathe

The air with cheerful spirit, for thy sake,
 My Infant! and for that good Mother dear, 925
 Who bore me; and hath prayed for me in
 vain;—

Yet not in vain; it shall not be in vain.'
 She spake, nor was the assurance unfulfilled;
 And if heart-rending thoughts would oft return,
 They stayed not long.—The blameless Infant
 grew;

930

The Child whom Ellen and her Mother loved
 They soon were proud of; tended it and nursed;
 A soothing comforter, although forlorn;
 Like a poor singing-bird from distant lands;
 Or a choice shrub, which he, who passes by 935
 With vacant mind, not seldom may observe
 Fair-flowering in a thinly-peopled house,
 Whose window, somewhat sadly, it adorns.

"Through four months' space the Infant
 drew its food
 From the maternal breast; then scruples rose;
 Thoughts, which the rich are free from, came
 and crossed 941
 The fond affection. She no more could bear
 By her offence to lay a twofold weight
 On a kind parent willing to forget
 Their slender means: so, to that parent's care
 Trusting her child, she left their common home,
 And undertook with dutiful content 947
 A Foster-mother's office.

 'Tis, perchance,
 Unknown to you that in these simple vales
 The natural feeling of equality 950
 Is by domestic service unimpaired;
 Yet, though such service be, with us, removed
 From sense of degradation, not the less
 The ungentle mind can easily find means
 To impose severe restraints and laws unjust, 955
 Which hapless Ellen now was doomed to feel:
 For (blinded by an over-anxious dread
 Of such excitement and divided thought
 As with her office would but ill accord)
 The pair, whose infant she was bound to nurse,
 Forbad her all communion with her own: 961
 Week after week, the mandate they enforced.
 —So near! yet not allowed upon that sight
 To fix her eyes—alas! 'twas hard to bear!
 But worse affliction must be borne—far worse;
 For 'tis Heaven's will—that, after a disease 966
 Begun and ended within three days' space,
 Her child should die; as Ellen now exclaimed,
 Her own—deserted child!—Once, only once,
 She saw it in that mortal malady; 970
 And, on the burial-day, could scarcely gain
 Permission to attend its obsequies.

She reached the house, last of the funeral train ;
 And some one, as she entered, having chanced
 To urge unthinkingly their prompt departure, 975
 'Nay,' said she, with commanding look, a spirit
 Of anger never seen in her before,
 'Nay, ye must wait my time!' and down she
 sate,
 And by the unclosed coffin kept her seat
 Weeping and looking, looking on and weeping,
 Upon the last sweet slumber of her Child, 981
 Until at length her soul was satisfied.

" You see the Infant's Grave; and to this spot,
 The Mother, oft as she was sent abroad,
 On whatsoever errand, urged her steps: 985
 Hither she came; here stood, and sometimes
 knelt

In the broad day, a rueful Magdalene!
 So call her; for not only she bewailed
 A mother's loss, but mourned in bitterness
 Her own transgression; penitent sincere 990
 As ever raised to heaven a streaming eye!
 —At length the parents of the foster-child,
 Noting that in despite of their commands
 She still renewed and could not but renew
 Those visitations, ceased to send her forth; 995
 Or, to the garden's narrow bounds, confined.
 I failed not to remind them that they erred;
 For holy Nature might not thus be crossed,
 Thus wronged in woman's breast: in vain I
 pleaded— 999

But the green stalk of Ellen's life was snapped,
 And the flower drooped; as every eye could see,
 It hung its head in mortal languishment.
 —Aided by this appearance, I at length
 Prevailed; and, from those bonds released, she
 went

Home to her mother's house.

The Youth was fled ; 1005
 The rash betrayer could not face the shame
 Or sorrow which his senseless guilt had caused ;
 And little would his presence, or proof given
 Of a relenting soul, have now availed ;
 For, like a shadow, he was passed away 1010
 From Ellen's thoughts ; had perished to her
 mind

For all concerns of fear, or hope, or love,
 Save only those which to their common shame,
 And to his moral being appertained :
 Hope from that quarter would, I know, have
 brought 1015
 A heavenly comfort ; there she recognised
 An unrelaxing bond, a mutual need ;
 There, and, as seemed, there only.

She had built,
 Her fond maternal heart had built, a nest
 In blindness all too near the river's edge ; 1020
 That work a summer flood with hasty swell
 Had swept away ; and now her Spirit longed
 For its last flight to heaven's security.
 —The bodily frame wasted from day to day ;
 Meanwhile, relinquishing all other cares, 1025
 Her mind she strictly tutored to find peace
 And pleasure in endurance. Much she thought,
 And much she read ; and brooded feelingly
 Upon her own unworthiness. To me,
 As to a spiritual comforter and friend, 1030
 Her heart she opened ; and no pains were
 spared

To mitigate, as gently as I could,
 The sting of self-reproach, with healing words.
 Meek Saint ! through patience glorified on
 earth !

In whom, as by her lonely hearth she sate, 1035

The ghastly face of cold decay put on
A sun-like beauty, and appeared divine!
May I not mention—that, within those walls,
In due observance of her pious wish,
The congregation joined with me in prayer 1040
For her soul's good? Nor was that office vain.
—Much did she suffer: but, if any friend,
Beholding her condition, at the sight
Gave way to words of pity or complaint,
She stilled them with a prompt reproof, and
said, 1045
'He who afflicts me knows what I can bear;
And, when I fail, and can endure no more,
Will mercifully take me to himself.'
So, through the cloud of death, her Spirit
passed
Into that pure and unknown world of love 1050
Where injury cannot come:—and here is laid
The mortal Body by her Infant's side."

The Vicar ceased ; and downcast looks made known
That each had listened with his inmost heart.
For me, the emotion scarcely was less strong
Or less benign than that which I had felt 1056
When seated near my venerable Friend,
Under those shady elms, from him I heard
The story that retraced the slow decline
Of Margaret, sinking on the lonely heath 1060
With the neglected house to which she clung.
—I noted that the Solitary's cheek
Confessed the power of nature.—Pleased though
sad,
More pleased than sad, the grey-haired Wan-
derer sate ;
Thanks to his pure imaginative soul 1065
Capacious and serene ; his blameless life,

His knowledge, wisdom, love of truth, and love
Of human kind! He was it who first broke
The pensive silence, saying:—

“Blest are they
Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong 1070
Than to do wrong, albeit themselves have
erred.

This tale gives proof that Heaven most gently
deals

With such, in their affliction.—Ellen’s fate,
Her tender spirit, and her contrite heart,
Call to my mind dark hints which I have heard
Of one who died within this vale, by doom 1076
Heavier, as his offence was heavier far.

Where, Sir, I pray you, where are laid the
bones

Of Wilfred Armathwaite?”

The Vicar answered,
“In that green nook, close by the Church-yard
wall, 1080

Beneath yon hawthorn, planted by myself
In memory and for warning, and in sign
Of sweetness where dire anguish had been
known,

Of reconciliation after deep offence—
There doth he rest. No theme his fate supplies
For the smooth glozings of the indulgent
world; 1086

Nor need the windings of his devious course
Be here retraced;—enough that, by mishap
And venial error, robbed of competence,
And her obsequious shadow, peace of mind,
He craved a substitute in troubled joy; 1091
Against his conscience rose in arms, and,
braving

Divine displeasure, broke the marriage-vow.
That which he had been weak enough to do

Of sorrow and dejection ; but I feel
 No sadness, when I think of what mine eyes
 See daily in that happy family. 1126
 —Bright garland form they for the pensive
 brow

Of their undrooping Father's widowhood,
 Those six fair Daughters, budding yet—not one,
 Not one of all the band, a full-blown flower.
 Deprest, and desolate of soul, as once 1131
 That Father was, and filled with anxious fear,
 Now, by experience taught, he stands assured,
 That God, who takes away, yet takes not half
 Of what he seems to take ; or gives it back,
 Not to our prayer, but far beyond our prayer ;
 He gives it—the boon produce of a soil 1137
 Which our endeavours have refused to till,
 And hope hath never watered. The Abode,
 Whose grateful owner can attest these truths,
 Even were the object nearer to our sight, 1141
 Would seem in no distinction to surpass
 The rudest habitations. Ye might think
 That it had sprung self-raised from earth, or
 grown
 Out of the living rock, to be adorned 1145
 By nature only ; but, if thither led,
 Ye would discover, then, a studious work
 Of many fancies, prompting many hands.

“Brought from the woods the honeysuckle
 twines
 Around the porch, and seems, in that trim
 place, 1150
 A plant no longer wild ; the cultured rose
 There blossoms, strong in health, and will be
 soon
 Roof-high ; the wild pink crowns the garden-
 wall,

And with the flowers are intermingled stones
 Sparry and bright, rough scatterings of the
 hills. 1155

These ornaments, that fade not with the year,
 A hardy Girl continues to provide;
 Who, mounting fearlessly the rocky heights,
 Her Father's prompt attendant, does for him
 All that a boy could do, but with delight 1160
 More keen and prouder daring; yet hath she,
 Within the garden, like the rest, a bed
 For her own flowers and favourite herbs, a
 space,

By sacred charter, holden for her use.
 —These, and whatever else the garden bears
 Of fruit or flower, permission asked or not, 1166
 I freely gather; and my leisure draws
 A not unfrequent pastime from the hum
 Of bees around their range of sheltered hives
 Busy in that enclosure; while the rill, 1170
 That sparkling thrids the rocks, attunes his
 voice

To the pure course of human life which there
 Flows on in solitude. But, when the gloom
 Of night is falling round my steps, then most
 This Dwelling charms me; often I stop short,
 (Who could refrain?) and feed by stealth my
 sight 1176

With prospect of the company within,
 Laid open through the blazing window:—there
 I see the eldest Daughter at her wheel
 Spinning amain, as if to overtake 1180
 The never-halting time; or, in her turn,
 Teaching some Novice of the sisterhood
 That skill in this or other household work,
 Which, from her Father's honoured hand, her-
 self, 1184

While she was yet a little-one, had learned.

Mild Man! he is not gay, but they are gay;
And the whole house seems filled with gaiety.
—Thrice happy, then, the Mother may be
deemed,

The Wife, from whose consolatory grave 1189
I turned, that ye in mind might witness where,
And how, her Spirit yet survives on earth!"

BOOK SEVENTH.

THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE
MOUNTAINS.—(CONTINUED.)

ARGUMENT.

Impression of these Narratives upon the Author's mind.—Pastor invited to give account of certain Graves that lie apart.—Clergyman and his Family.—Fortunate influence of change of situation.—Activity in extreme old age.—Another Clergyman, a character of resolute Virtue.—Lamentations over mis-directed applause.—Instance of less exalted excellence in a deaf man.—Elevated character of a blind man.—Reflection upon Blindness.—Interrupted by a Peasant who passes—his animal cheerfulness and careless vivacity.—He occasions a digression on the fall of beautiful and interesting Trees.—A female Infant's Grave.—Joy at her Birth.—Sorrow at her Departure.—A youthful Peasant—his patriotic enthusiasm and distinguished qualities—his untimely death.—Exultation of the Wanderer, as a patriot, in this Picture.—Solitary how affected.—Monument of a Knight.—Traditions concerning him.—Peroration of the Wanderer on the transitoriness of things and the revolutions of society.—Hints at his own past Calling.—Thanks the Pastor.

THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.—(CONTINUED.)

WHILE thus from theme to theme the Historian
passed,

The words he uttered, and the scene that lay
Before our eyes, awakened in my mind
Vivid remembrance of those long-past hours ;
When, in the hollow of some shadowy vale, 5
(What time the splendour of the setting sun
Lay beautiful on Snowdon's sovereign brow,
On Cader Idris, or huge Penmanmaur)
A wandering Youth, I listened with delight
To pastoral melody or warlike air, 10
Drawn from the chords of the ancient British
harp

By some accomplished Master, while he sate
Amid the quiet of the green recess,
And there did inexhaustibly dispense
An interchange of soft or solemn tunes, 15
Tender or blithe ; now, as the varying mood
Of his own spirit urged,—now, as a voice
From youth or maiden, or some honoured
chief

Of his compatriot villagers (that hung
Around him, drinking in the impassioned
notes 20
Of the time-hallowed minstrelsy) required

For their heart's ease or pleasure. Strains of
power

Were they, to seize and occupy the sense ;
But to a higher mark than song can reach
Rose this pure eloquence. And, when the
stream 25

Which overflowed the soul was passed away,
A consciousness remained that it had left,
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts,
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed. 30

“These grassy heaps lie amicably close,”
Said I, “like surges heaving in the wind
Along the surface of a mountain pool:
Whence comes it, then, that yonder we behold
Five graves, and only five, that rise together 35
Unsociably sequestered, and encroaching
On the smooth play-ground of the village-
school?”

The Vicar answered,—“No disdainful pride
In them who rest beneath, nor any course
Of strange or tragic accident, hath helped 40
To place those hillocks in that lonely guise.
—Once more look forth, and follow with your
sight

The length of road that from yon mountain's
base

Through bare enclosures stretches, 'till its line
Is lost within a little tuft of trees ; 45
Then, reappearing in a moment, quits
The cultured fields ; and up the heathy waste,
Mounts, as you see, in mazes serpentine,
Led towards an easy outlet of the vale.
That little shady spot, that sylvan tuft, 50
By which the road is hidden, also hides

A cottage from our view ; though I discern
 (Ye scarcely can) amid its sheltering trees
 The smokeless chimney-top.—

All unembowered

And naked stood that lowly Parsonage 55
 (For such in truth it is, and appertains
 To a small Chapel in the vale beyond)
 When hither came its last Inhabitant.
 Rough and forbidding were the choicest roads
 By which our northern wilds could then be
 crossed ; 60

And into most of these secluded vales
 Was no access for wain, heavy or light.
 So, at his dwelling-place the Priest arrived
 With store of household goods, in panniers
 slung

On sturdy horses graced with jingling bells, 65
 And on the back of more ignoble beast ;
 That, with like burthen of effects most prized
 Or easiest carried, closed the motley train.
 Young was I then, a school-boy of eight
 years ;

But still, methinks, I see them as they passed
 In order, drawing toward their wished-for
 home. 71

—Rocked by the motion of a trusty ass
 Two ruddy children hung, a well-poised freight,
 Each in his basket nodding drowsily ;
 Their bonnets, I remember, wreathed with
 flowers, 75

Which told it was the pleasant month of June ;
 And, close behind, the comely Matron rode,
 A woman of soft speech and gracious smile,
 And with a lady's mien.—From far they came,
 Even from Northumbrian hills ; yet theirs
 had been 80

A merry journey, rich in pastime, cheered

By music, prank, and laughter-stirring jest ;
 And freak put on, and arch word dropped—
 to swell

The cloud of fancy and uncouth surmise
 That gathered round the slowly-moving train.
 —‘ Whence do they come ? and with what
 errand charged ? 86

Belong they to the fortune-telling tribe
 Who pitch their tents under the green-wood
 tree ?

Or Strollers are they, furnished to enact
 Fair Rosamond, and the Children of the
 Wood, 90

And, by that whiskered tabby’s aid, set forth
 The lucky venture of sage Whittington,
 When the next village hears the show
 announced

By blast of trumpet ?’ Plenteous was the
 growth

Of such conjectures, overheard, or seen 95

On many a staring countenance portrayed
 Of boor or burgher, as they marched along.

And more than once their steadiness of face
 Was put to proof, and exercise supplied

To their inventive humour, by stern looks, 100

And questions in authoritative tone,

From some staid guardian of the public peace,
 Checking the sober steed on which he rode,

In his suspicious wisdom ; oftener still,

By notice indirect, or blunt demand 105

From traveller halting in his own despite,

A simple curiosity to ease :

Of which adventures, that beguiled and cheered

Their grave migration, the good pair would tell,

With undiminished glee, in hoary age. 110

“ A Priest he was by function ; but his course

From his youth up, and high as manhood's
noon,

(The hour of life to which he then was brought)

Had been irregular, I might say, wild ;

By books unsteadied, by his pastoral care 115

Too little checked. An active, ardent mind ;

A fancy pregnant with resource and scheme

To cheat the sadness of a rainy day ;

Hands apt for all ingenious arts and games ;

A generous spirit, and a body strong 120

To cope with stoutest champions of the bowl ;

Had earned for him sure welcome, and the
rights

Of a prized visitant, in the jolly hall

Of country 'squire ; or at the statelier board

Of duke or earl, from scenes of courtly pomp 125

Withdrawn,—to while away the summer hours

In condescension among rural guests.

“ With these high comrades he had revelled
long,

Frolicked industriously, a simple Clerk

By hopes of coming patronage beguiled 130

Till the heart sickened. So, each loftier aim

Abandoning and all his showy friends,

For a life's stay (slender it was, but sure)

He turned to this secluded chapelry ;

That had been offered to his doubtful choice 135

By an unthought-of patron. Bleak and bare

They found the cottage, their allotted home ;

Naked without, and rude within ; a spot

With which the Cure not long had been
endowed :

And far remote the chapel stood,—remote, 140

And, from his Dwelling, unapproachable,

Save through a gap high in the hills, an opening

Shadeless and shelterless, by driving showers

Frequented, and beset with howling winds.
Yet cause was none, whate'er regret might hang
On his own mind, to quarrel with the choice 146
Or the necessity that fixed him here ;
Apart from old temptations, and constrained
To punctual labour in his sacred charge.
See him a constant preacher to the poor ! 150
And visiting, though not with saintly zeal,
Yet, when need was, with no reluctant will,
The sick in body, or distress in mind ;
And, by as salutary change, compelled
To rise from timely sleep, and meet the day 155
With no engagement, in his thoughts, more
proud
Or splendid than his garden could afford,
His fields, or mountains by the heath-cock
ranged,
Or the wild brooks ; from which he now
returned
Contented to partake the quiet meal 160
Of his own board, where sat his gentle Mate
And three fair Children, plentifully fed
Though simply, from their little household
farm ;
Nor wanted timely treat of fish or fowl
By nature yielded to his practised hand ;— 165
To help the small but certain comings-in
Of that spare benefice. Yet not the less
Theirs was a hospitable board, and theirs
A charitable door.

So days and years
Passed on ;—the inside of that rugged house
Was trimmed and brightened by the Matron's
care, 171
And gradually enriched with things of price,
Which might be lacked for use or ornament.
What, though no soft and costly sofa there

Insidiously stretched out its lazy length, 175
 And no vain mirror glittered upon the walls,
 Yet were the windows of the low abode
 By shutters weather-fended, which at once
 Repelled the storm and deadened its loud roar.
 Their snow-white curtains hung in decent folds ;
 Tough moss, and long-enduring mountain
 plants, 181
 That creep along the ground with sinuous trail,
 Were nicely braided ; and composed a work
 Like Indian mats, that with appropriate grace
 Lay at the threshold and the inner doors ; 185
 And a fair carpet, woven of homespun wool
 But tintured daintily with florid hues,
 For seemliness and warmth, on festal days,
 Covered the smooth blue slabs of mountain-
 stone 189
 With which the parlour-floor, in simplest guise
 Of pastoral homesteads, had been long inlaid.

“ Those pleasing works the Housewife’s skill
 produced :

Meanwhile the unsedentary Master’s hand
 Was busier with his task—to rid, to plant,
 To rear for food, for shelter, and delight ; 195
 A thriving covert ! And when wishes, formed
 In youth, and sanctioned by the riper mind,
 Restored me to my native valley, here
 To end my days ; well pleased was I to see
 The once-bare cottage, on the mountain-side, 200
 Screen’d from assault of every bitter blast ;
 While the dark shadows of the summer leaves
 Danced in the breeze, chequering its mossy roof.
 Time, which had thus afforded willing help .
 To beautify with nature’s fairest growths 205
 This rustic tenement, had gently shed,
 Upon its Master’s frame, a wintry grace ;

The comeliness of unenfeebled age.

“ But how could I say, gently ? for he still
Retained a flashing eye, a burning palm, 210
A stirring foot, a head which beat at nights
Upon its pillow with a thousand schemes.
Few likings had he dropped, few pleasures lost ;
Generous and charitable, prompt to serve ;
And still his harsher passions kept their hold—
Anger and indignation. Still he loved 216
The sound of titled names, and talked in glee
Of long-past banquetings with high-born
friends :

Then, from those lulling fits of vain delight
Uproused by recollected injury, railed 220
At their false ways disdainfully,—and oft
In bitterness, and with a threatening eye
Of fire, incensed beneath its hoary brow.
—Those transports, with staid looks of pure
good-will,

And with soft smile, his consort would reprove.
She, far behind him in the race of years, 226
Yet keeping her first mildness, was advanced
Far nearer, in the habit of her soul,
To that still region whither all are bound.
Him might we liken to the setting sun 230
As seen not seldom on some gusty day,
Struggling and bold, and shining from the west
With an inconstant and unmellowed light ;
She was a soft attendant cloud, that hung
As if with wish to veil the restless orb ; 235
From which it did itself imbibe a ray
Of pleasing lustre.—But no more of this ;
I better love to sprinkle on the sod
That now divides the pair, or rather say,
That still unites them, praises, like heaven’s
dew, 240

Without reserve descending upon both.

“Our very first in eminence of years
This old Man stood, the patriarch of the Vale!
And, to his unmolested mansion, death
Had never come, through space of forty years;
Sparing both old and young in that abode. 246
Suddenly then they disappeared: not twice
Had summer scorched the fields; not twice had
fallen,

On those high peaks, the first autumnal snow,
Before the greedy visiting was closed, 250
And the long-privileged house left empty—
swept

As by a plague. Yet no rapacious plague
Had been among them; all was gentle death,
One after one, with intervals of peace.
A happy consummation! an accord 255
Sweet, perfect, to be wished for! save that here
Was something which to mortal sense might
sound

Like harshness,—that the old grey-headed Sire,
The oldest, he was taken last, survived
When the meek Partner of his age, his Son, 260
His Daughter, and that late and high-prized
gift,
His little smiling Grandchild, were no more.

“‘All gone, all vanished! he deprived and
bare,
How will he face the remnant of his life? 264
What will become of him?’ we said, and mused
In sad conjectures—‘Shall we meet him now
Haunting with rod and line the craggy brooks?
Or shall we overhear him, as we pass,
Striving to entertain the lonely hours
With music?’ (for he had not ceased to touch

The harp or viol which himself had framed, 271
 For their sweet purposes, with perfect skill.)
 'What titles will he keep? will he remain
 Musician, gardener, builder, mechanist,
 A planter, and a rearer from the seed? 275
 A man of hope and forward-looking mind
 Even to the last!—Such was he, unsubdued.
 But Heaven was gracious; yet a little while,
 And this Survivor, with his cheerful throng
 Of open projects, and his inward hoard 280
 Of unsunned griefs, too many and too keen,
 Was overcome by unexpected sleep,
 In one blest moment. Like a shadow thrown
 Softly and lightly from a passing cloud,
 Death fell upon him, while reclined he lay 285
 For noontide solace on the summer grass,
 The warm lap of his mother earth: and so,
 Their lenient term of separation past,
 That family (whose graves you there behold)
 By yet a higher privilege once more 290
 Were gathered to each other."

Calm of mind

And silence waited on these closing words;
 Until the Wanderer (whether moved by fear
 Lest in those passages of life were some
 That might have touched the sick heart of his
 Friend 295

Too nearly, or intent to reinforce
 His own firm spirit in degree deprest
 By tender sorrow for our mortal state)
 Thus silence broke:—"Behold a thoughtless
 Man

From vice and premature decay preserved 300
 By useful habits, to a fitter soil
 Transplanted ere too late.—The hermit, lodged
 Amid the untrodden desert, tells his beads,
 With each repeating its allotted prayer

And thus divides and thus relieves the time ; 305
 Smooth task, with *his* compared, whose mind
 could string,

Not scantily, bright minutes on the thread
 Of keen domestic anguish ; and beguile
 A solitude, unchosen, unprofessed ;
 Till gentlest death released him.

Far from us 310

Be the desire—too curiously to ask
 How much of this is but the blind result
 Of cordial spirits and vital temperament,
 And what to higher powers is justly due. 314
 But you, Sir, know that in a neighbouring vale
 A Priest abides before whose life such doubts
 Fall to the ground ; whose gifts of nature lie
 Retired from notice, lost in attributes
 Of reason, honourably effaced by debts
 Which her poor treasure-house is content to
 owe, 320

And conquests over her dominion gained,
 To which her frowardness must needs submit.
 In this one Man is shown a temperance—proof
 Against all trials ; industry severe
 And constant as the motion of the day ; 325
 Stern self-denial round him spread, with shade
 That might be deemed forbidding, did not there
 All generous feelings flourish and rejoice ;
 Forbearance, charity in deed and thought,
 And resolution competent to take 330
 Out of the bosom of simplicity
 All that her holy customs recommend,
 And the best ages of the world prescribe.
 —Preaching, administering, in every work
 Of his sublime vocation, in the walks 335
 Of worldly intercourse between man and man,
 And in his humble dwelling, he appears
 A labourer, with moral virtue girt,

With spiritual graces, like a glory, crowned."

"Doubt can be none," the Pastor said, "for
 whom 340
 This portraiture is sketched. The great, the
 good,
 The well-beloved, the fortunate, the wise,—
 These titles emperors and chiefs have borne,
 Honour assumed or given: and him, the
 WONDERFUL,
 Our simple shepherds, speaking from the heart,
 Deservedly have styled.—From his abode 346
 In a dependent chapelry that lies
 Behind yon hill, a poor and rugged wild,
 Which in his soul he lovingly embraced,
 And, having once espoused, would never quit;
 Into its graveyard will ere long be borne 351
 That lowly, great, good Man. A simple stone
 May cover him; and by its help, perchance,
 A century shall hear his name pronounced,
 With images attendant on the sound; 355
 Then, shall the slowly-gathering twilight close
 In utter night; and of his course remain
 No cognizable vestiges, no more
 Than of this breath, which shapes itself in words
 To speak of him, and instantly dissolves." 360

The Pastor pressed by thoughts which round
 his theme
 Still linger'd, after a brief pause, resumed;
 "Noise is there not enough in doleful war,
 But that the heaven-born poet must stand forth,
 And lend the echoes of his sacred shell, 365
 To multiply and aggravate the din?
 Pangs are there not enough in hopeless love—
 And, in requited passion, all too much
 Of turbulence, anxiety, and fear—

But that the minstrel of the rural shade 370

Must tune his pipe, insidiously to nurse

The perturbation in the suffering breast,

And propagate its kind, far as he may?

—Ah who (and with such rapture as befits

The hallowed theme) will rise and celebrate 375

The good man's purposes and deeds; retrace

His struggles, his discomfitures deplore,

His triumphs hail, and glorify his end;

That virtue, like the fumes and vapoury clouds

Through fancy's heat redounding in the brain,

And like the soft infections of the heart, 381

By charm of measured words may spread o'er
field,

Hamlet, and town; and piety survive

Upon the lips of men in hall or bower;

Not for reproof, but high and warm delight, 385

And grave encouragement, by song inspired?

—Vain thought! but wherefore murmur or
repine?

The memory of the just survives in heaven:

And, without sorrow, will the ground receive

That venerable clay. Meanwhile the best 390

Of what lies here confines us to degrees

In excellence less difficult to reach,

And milder worth: nor need we travel far

From those to whom our last regards were paid,

For such example.

Almost at the root 395

Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare

And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,

Oft stretches toward me, like a long straight path

Traced faintly in the greensward; there, be-

neath

A plain blue stone, a gentle Dalesman lies, 400

From whom, in early childhood, was withdrawn

The precious gift of hearing. He grew up

By the pure bond of independent love,
 An inmate of a second family ; 435
 The fellow-labourer and friend of him
 To whom the small inheritance had fallen.

—Nor deem that his mild presence was a weight
 That pressed upon his brother's house ; for
 books

Were ready comrades whom he could not tire ;
 Of whose society the blameless Man 441
 Was never satiate. Their familiar voice,
 Even to old age, with unabated charm
 Beguiled his leisure hours ; refreshed his
 thoughts ;

Beyond its natural elevation raised 445
 His introverted spirit ; and bestowed
 Upon his life an outward dignity
 Which all acknowledged. The dark winter
 night,

The stormy day, each had its own resource ;
 Song of the muses, sage historic tale, 450
 Science severe, or word of holy Writ
 Announcing immortality and joy
 To the assembled spirits of just men
 Made perfect, and from injury secure.

—Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the field,
 To no perverse suspicion he gave way, 456
 No languor, peevishness, nor vain complaint :
 And they, who were about him, did not fail
 In reverence, or in courtesy ; they prized 459
 His gentle manners : and his peaceful smiles,
 The gleams of his slow-varying countenance,
 Were met with answering sympathy and love.

“ At length, when sixty years and five were
 told,

A slow disease insensibly consumed 464
 The powers of nature : and a few short steps

Of friends and kindred bore him from his home
(Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags)
To the profounder stillness of the grave.
—Nor was his funeral denied the grace
Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful grief;
Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude. 471
And now that monumental stone preserves
His name, and unambitiously relates
How long, and by what kindly outward aids,
And in what pure contentedness of mind, 475
The sad privation was by him endured.
—And yon tall pine-tree, whose composing
 sound
Was wasted on the good Man's living ear,
Hath now its own peculiar sanctity;
And, at the touch of every wandering breeze,
Murmurs, not idly, o'er his peaceful grave. 481

“Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful of
 things!
Guide of our way, mysterious comforter!
Whose sacred influence, spread through earth
 and heaven,
We all too thanklessly participate, 485
Thy gifts were utterly withheld from him
Whose place of rest is near yon ivied porch.
Yet, of the wild brooks ask if he complained;
Ask of the channelled rivers if they held
A safer, easier, more determined, course. 490
What terror doth it strike into the mind
To think of one, blind and alone, advancing
Straight toward some precipice's airy brink!
But, timely warned, *He* would have stayed his
 steps,
Protected, say enlightened, by his ear; 495
And on the very edge of vacancy
Not more endangered than a man whose eye

Beholds the gulf beneath.—No floweret blooms
 Throughout the lofty range of these rough hills,
 Nor in the woods, that could from him conceal
 Its birth-place; none whose figure did not live
 Upon his touch. The bowels of the earth 502
 Enriched with knowledge his industrious mind;
 The ocean paid him tribute from the stores
 Lodged in her bosom; and, by science led, 505
 His genius mounted to the plains of heaven.
 —Methinks I see him—how his eye-balls rolled,
 Beneath his ample brow, in darkness paired,—
 But each instinct with spirit; and the frame
 Of the whole countenance alive with thought,
 Fancy, and understanding; while the voice 511
 Discoursed of natural or moral truth
 With eloquence, and such authentic power,
 That, in his presence, humbler knowledge stood
 Abashed, and tender pity overawed.” 515

“A noble—and, to unreflecting minds,
 A marvellous spectacle,” the Wanderer said,
 “Beings like these present! But proof abounds
 Upon the earth that faculties, which seem
 Extinguished, do not, *therefore*, cease to be. 520
 And to the mind among her powers of sense
 This transfer is permitted,—not alone
 That the bereft their recompense may win;
 But for remoter purposes of love
 And charity; nor last nor least for this, 525
 That to the imagination may be given
 A type and shadow of an awful truth;
 How, likewise, under sufferance divine,
 Darkness is banished from the realms of death,
 By man’s imperishable spirit, quelled. 530
 Unto the men who see not as we see
 Futurity was thought, in ancient times,
 To be laid open, and they prophesied.

And know we not that from the blind have
 flowed
 The highest, holiest, raptures of the lyre; 535
 And wisdom married to immortal verse?"

Among the humbler Worthies, at our feet
 Lying insensible to human praise,
 Love, or regret,—*whose* lineaments would next
 Have been portrayed, I guess not; but it
 chanced 540
 That, near the quiet church-yard where we sate,
 A team of horses, with a ponderous freight
 Pressing behind, adown a rugged slope,
 Whose sharp descent confounded their array,
 Came at that moment, ringing noisily. 545

"Here," said the Pastor, "do we muse, and
 mourn
 The waste of death; and lo! the giant oak
 Stretched on his bier—that massy timber wain;
 Nor fail to note the Man who guides the team."

He was a peasant of the lowest class: 550
 Grey locks profusely round his temples hung
 In clustering curls, like ivy, which the bite
 Of winter cannot thin; the fresh air lodged
 Within his cheek, as light within a cloud;
 And he returned our greeting with a smile. 555
 When he had passed, the Solitary spake;
 "A Man he seems of cheerful yesterdays
 And confident to-morrows; with a face
 Not worldly-minded, for it bears too much
 Of Nature's impress,—gaiety and health, 560
 Freedom and hope; but keen, withal, and
 shrewd.
 His gestures note,—and hark! his tones of voice
 Are all vivacious as his mien and looks."

The Pastor answered, "You have read him well.

Year after year is added to his store 565
 With *silent* increase: summers, winters—past,
 Past or to come; yea, boldly might I say,
 Ten summers and ten winters of a space
 That lies beyond life's ordinary bounds,
 Upon his sprightly vigour cannot fix 570
 The obligation of an anxious mind,
 A pride in having, or a fear to lose;
 Possessed like outskirts of some large domain,
 By any one more thought of than by him
 Who holds the land in fee, its careless lord! 575
 Yet is the creature rational, endowed
 With foresight; hears, too, every sabbath day,
 The christian promise with attentive ear;
 Nor will, I trust, the Majesty of Heaven
 Reject the incense offered up by him, 580
 Though of the kind which beasts and birds
 present
 In grove or pasture; cheerfulness of soul,
 From trepidation and repining free.
 How many scrupulous worshippers fall down
 Upon their knees, and daily homage pay 585
 Less worthy, less religious even, than his!

"This qualified respect, the old Man's due,
 Is paid without reluctance; but in truth,"
 (Said the good Vicar with a fond half-smile)
 "I feel at times a motion of despite 590
 Towards one, whose bold contrivances and skill,
 As you have seen, bear such conspicuous part
 In works of havoc; taking from these vales,
 One after one, their proudest ornaments.
 Full oft his doings leave me to deplore 595
 Tall ash-tree, sown by winds, by vapours
 nursed,

In the dry crannies of the pendent rocks ;
Light birch, aloft upon the horizon's edge,
A veil of glory for the ascending moon ;
And oak whose roots by noontide dew were
 damp'd, 600

And on whose forehead inaccessible
The raven lodged in safety.—Many a ship
Launched into Morecamb-bay, to *him* hath
owed

Her strong knee-timbers, and the mast that
bears

The loftiest of her pendants ; He, from park 605
Or forest, fetched the enormous axle-tree
That whirls (how slow itself !) ten thousand
spindles :

And the vast engine labouring in the mine,
Content with meaner prowess, must have lacked
The trunk and body of its marvellous strength,
If his undaunted enterprise had failed 611
Among the mountain coves.

Yon household fir,
A guardian planted to fence off the blast,
But towering high the roof above, as if
Its humble destination were forgot— 615

That sycamore, which annually holds
 Within its shade, as in a stately tent
 On all sides open to the fanning breeze,
 A grave assemblage, seated while they shear 619
 The fleece-encumbered flock—the JOYFUL ELM,
 Around whose trunk the maidens dance in
 May—

And the LORD'S OAK—would plead their
several rights

In vain, if he were master of their fate ;
His sentence to the axe would doom them all.
But, green in age and lusty as he is, 625
And promising to keep his hold on earth

Less, as might seem, in rivalry with men
 Than with the forest's more enduring growth,
 His own appointed hour will come at last ;
 And, like the haughty Spoilers of the world, 630
 This keen Destroyer, in his turn, must fall.

“ Now from the living pass we once again :
 From Age,” the Priest continued, “ turn your
 thoughts ;
 From Age, that often unlamented drops,
 And mark that daisied hillock, three spans
 long ! 635
 —Seven lusty Sons sate daily round the board
 Of Gold-rill side ; and, when the hope had
 ceased

Of other progeny, a Daughter then
 Was given, the crowning bounty of the whole ;
 And so acknowledged with a tremulous joy 640
 Felt to the centre of that heavenly calm
 With which by nature every mother's soul
 Is stricken in the moment when her throes
 Are ended, and her ears have heard the cry
 Which tells her that a living child is born ; 645
 And she lies conscious, in a blissful rest,
 That the dread storm is weathered by them
 both.

“ The Father—him at this unlooked-for
 gift
 A bolder transport seizes. From the side
 Of his bright hearth, and from his open door,
 Day after day the gladness is diffused 651
 To all that come, almost to all that pass ;
 Invited, summoned, to partake the cheer
 Spread on the never-empty board, and drink
 Health and good wishes to his new-born girl,
 From cups replenished by his joyous hand. 656

—Those seven fair brothers variously were
moved

Each by the thoughts best suited to his years:
But most of all and with most thankful mind
The hoary grandsire felt himself enriched; 660
A happiness that ebbed not, but remained
To fill the total measure of his soul!

—From the low tenement, his own abode,
Whither, as to a little private cell,
He had withdrawn from bustle, care, and
noise, 665

To spend the sabbath of old age in peace,
Once every day he duteously repaired
To rock the cradle of the slumbering babe:
For in that female infant's name he heard
The silent name of his departed wife; 670
Heart-stirring music! hourly heard that name;
Full blest he was, 'Another Margaret Green,'
Oft did he say, 'was come to Gold-rill side.'

“Oh! pang unthought of, as the precious
boon
Itself had been unlooked-for; oh! dire stroke
Of desolating anguish for them all! 676
—Just as the Child could totter on the floor,
And, by some friendly finger's help upstayed,
Range round the garden walk, while she per-
chance

Was catching at some novelty of spring, 680
Ground-flower, or glossy insect from its cell
Drawn by the sunshine—at that hopeful season
The winds of March, smiting insidiously,
Raised in the tender passage of the throat 684
Viewless obstruction; whence, all unforewarned,
The household lost their pride and soul's de-
light.

—But time hath power to soften all regrets,

And prayer and thought can bring to worst
distress

Due resignation. Therefore, though some tears
Fail not to spring from either Parent's eye 690
Oft as they hear of sorrow like their own,
Yet this departed Little-one, too long
The innocent troubler of their quiet, sleeps
In what may now be called a peaceful bed.

“On a bright day—so calm and bright, it
seemed 695

To us, with our sad spirits, heavenly-fair—
These mountains echoed to an unknown sound ;
A volley, thrice repeated o'er the Corse
Let down into the hollow of that grave,
Whose shelving sides are red with naked mould.
Ye rains of April, duly wet this earth ! 701
Spare, burning sun of midsummer, these sods,
That they may knit together, and therewith
Our thoughts unite in kindred quietness !
Nor so the Valley shall forget her loss. 705
Dear Youth, by young and old alike beloved,
To me as precious as my own !—Green herbs
May creep (I wish that they would softly creep)
Over thy last abode, and we may pass
Reminded less imperiously of thee ;— 710
The ridge itself may sink into the breast
Of earth, the great abyss, and be no more ;
Yet shall not thy remembrance leave our
hearts,
Thy image disappear !

The Mountain-ash

No eye can overlook, when 'mid a grove 715
Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head
Decked with autumnal berries, that outshine
Spring's richest blossoms ; and ye may have
marked,

By a brook-side or solitary tarn,
How she her station doth adorn : the pool 720
Glow's at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
Are brightened round her. In his native vale
Such and so glorious did this Youth appear ;
A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts
By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam 725
Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
By all the graces with which nature's hand
Had lavishly arrayed him. As old bards
Tell in their idle songs of wandering gods,
Pan or Apollo, veiled in human form : 730
Yet, like the sweet-breathed violet of the shade
Discovered in their own despite to sense
Of mortals (if such fables without blame
May find chance-mention on this sacred ground)
So, through a simple rustic garb's disguise, 735
And through the impediment of rural cares,
In him revealed a scholar's genius shone ;
And so, not wholly hidden from men's sight,
In him the spirit of a hero walked
Our unpretending valley.—How the quoit 740
Whizzed from the Stripling's arm ! If touched
by him,
The inglorious foot-ball mounted to the pitch
Of the lark's flight,—or shaped a rainbow curve,
Aloft, in prospect of the shouting field !
The indefatigable fox had learned 745
To dread his perseverance in the chase.
With admiration would he lift his eyes
To the wide-ruling eagle, and his hand
Was loth to assault the majesty he loved : 749
Else had the strongest fastnesses proved weak
To guard the royal brood. The sailing glead,
The wheeling swallow, and the darting snipe,
The sportive sea-gull dancing with the waves,
And cautious water-fowl, from distant climes,

Fixed at their seat, the centre of the Mere, 755
 Were subject to young Oswald's steady aim,
 And lived by his forbearance.

From the coast
 Of France a boastful Tyrant hurled his threats ;
 Our Country marked the preparation vast
 Of hostile forces ; and she called—with voice 760
 That filled her plains, that reached her utmost
 shores,

And in remotest vales was heard—to arms !
 —Then, for the first time, here you might have
 seen

The shepherd's grey to martial scarlet changed,
 That flashed uncouthly through the woods and
 fields. 765

Ten hardy Striplings, all in bright attire,
 And graced with shining weapons, weekly
 marched,

From this lone valley, to a central spot
 Where, in assemblage with the flower and
 choice

Of the surrounding district, they might learn
 The rudiments of war ; ten—hardy, strong, 771
 And valiant ; but young Oswald, like a chief
 And yet a modest comrade, led them forth
 From their shy solitude, to face the world,
 With a gay confidence and seemly pride ; 775
 Measuring the soil beneath their happy feet
 Like Youths released from labour, and yet
 bound

To most laborious service, though to them
 A festival of unencumbered ease ;
 The inner spirit keeping holiday, 780
 Like vernal ground to sabbath sunshine left.

“Oft have I marked him, at some leisure hour,
 Stretched on the grass, or seated in the shade,

Among his fellows, while an ample map
Before their eyes lay carefully outspread, 785
From which the gallant teacher would discourse,
Now pointing this way, and now that.—‘ Here
flows,’

Thus would he say, ‘ The Rhine, that famous
stream !

Eastward, the Danube toward this inland sea,
A mightier river, winds from realm to realm ; 790
And, like a serpent, shows his glittering back
Bespotted—with innumerable isles :

Here reigns the Russian, there the Turk ;
observe

His capital city !’ Thence, along a tract
Of livelier interest to his hopes and fears, 795
His finger moved, distinguishing the spots
Where wide-spread conflict then most fiercely
raged ;

Nor left unstigmatized those fatal fields
On which the sons of mighty Germany
Were taught a base submission.—‘ Here be-
hold 800

A nobler race, the Switzers, and their land,
Vales deeper far than these of ours, huge woods,
And mountains white with everlasting snow !’
—And, surely, he, that spake with kindling
brow,

Was a true patriot, hopeful as the best 805
Of that young peasantry, who, in our days,
Have fought and perished for Helvetia’s rights—
Ah, not in vain !—or those who, in old time,
For work of happier issue, to the side
Of Tell came trooping from a thousand huts, 810
When he had risen alone ! No braver Youth
Descended from Judean heights, to march
With righteous Joshua ; nor appeared in arms
When grove was felled, and altar was cast down,

And Gideon blew the trumpet, soul-inflamed, 815
And strong in hatred of idolatry."

The Pastor, even as if by these last words
Raised from his seat within the chosen shade,
Moved towards the grave;—instinctively his
steps 819

We followed; and my voice with joy exclaimed:
"Power to the Oppressors of the world is given,
A might of which they dream not. Oh! the
curse,

To be the awakener of divinest thoughts,
Father and founder of exalted deeds;
And, to whole nations bound in servile straits,
The liberal donor of capacities 826

More than heroic! this to be, nor yet
Have sense of one connatural wish, nor yet
Deserve the least return of human thanks;
Winning no recompense but deadly hate 830
With pity mixed, astonishment with scorn!"

When this involuntary strain had ceased,
The Pastor said: "So Providence is served;
The forkèd weapon of the skies can send
Illumination into deep, dark holds, 835
Which the mild sunbeam hath not power to
pierce.

Ye Thrones that have defied remorse, and cast
Pity away, soon shall ye quake with *fear*!
For, not unconscious of the mighty debt
Which to outrageous wrong the sufferer owes,
Europe, through all her habitable bounds, 841
Is thirsting for *their* overthrow, who yet
Survive, as pagan temples stood of yore,
By horror of their impious rites, preserved;
Are still permitted to extend their pride, 845
Like cedars on the top of Lebanon

Darkening the sun.

But less impatient thoughts,
And love 'all hoping and expecting all,'
This hallowed grave demands, where rests in
peace

A humble champion of the better cause ; 850
A Peasant-youth, so call him, for he asked
No higher name ; in whom our country showed,
As in a favourite son, most beautiful.

In spite of vice, and misery, and disease,
Spread with the spreading of her wealthy arts,
England, the ancient and the free, appeared 856
In him to stand before my swimming eyes,
Unconquerably virtuous and secure.

—No more of this, lest I offend his dust :
Short was his life, and a brief tale remains. 860

“ One day—a summer's day of annual pomp
And solemn chase—from morn to sultry noon
His steps had followed, fleetest of the fleet,
The red-deer driven along its native heights
With cry of hound and horn ; and, from that
toil 865

Returned with sinews weakened and relaxed,
This generous Youth, too negligent of self,
Plunged—'mid a gay and busy throng convened
To wash the fleeces of his Father's flock—
Into the chilling flood. Convulsions dire 870
Seized him, that self-same night ; and through
the space

Of twelve ensuing days his frame was wrenched,
Till nature rested from her work in death.
To him, thus snatched away, his comrades paid
A soldier's honours. At his funeral hour 875
Bright was the sun, the sky a cloudless blue—
A golden lustre slept upon the hills ;
And if by chance a stranger, wandering there,

From some commanding eminence had looked
 Down on this spot, well pleased would he have
 seen 880

A glittering spectacle ; but every face
 Was pallid : seldom hath that eye been moist
 With tears, that wept not then ; nor were the
 few,

Who from their dwellings came not forth to join
 In this sad service, less disturbed than we. 885
 They started at the tributary peal
 Of instantaneous thunder, which announced,
 Through the still air, the closing of the Grave ;
 And distant mountains echoed with a sound
 Of lamentation, never heard before !” 890

The Pastor ceased.—My venerable Friend
 Victoriously upraised his clear bright eye ;
 And, when that eulogy was ended, stood
 Enrapt, as if his inward sense perceived
 The prolongation of some still response, 895
 Sent by the ancient Soul of this wide land,
 The Spirit of its mountains and its seas,
 Its cities, temples, fields, its awful power,
 Its rights and virtues—by that Deity
 Descending, and supporting his pure heart 900
 With patriotic confidence and joy.
 And, at the last of those memorial words,
 The pining Solitary turned aside ;
 Whether through manly instinct to conceal
 Tender emotions spreading from the heart 905
 To his worn cheek ; or with uneasy shame
 For those cold humours of habitual spleen
 That, fondly seeking in dispraise of man
 Solace and self-excuse, had sometimes urged
 To self-abuse a not ineloquent tongue. 910
 —Right toward the sacred Edifice his steps
 Had been directed ; and we saw him now

Intent upon a monumental stone,
Whose uncouth form was grafted on the wall,
Or rather seemed to have grown into the
side

Of the rude pile ; as oft-times trunks of trees,
Where nature works in wild and craggy spots,
Are seen incorporate with the living rock—
To endure for aye. The Vicar, taking note
Of his employment, with a courteous smile 920
Exclaimed—

“The sagest Antiquarian’s eye
That task would foil;” then, letting fall his
voice

While he advanced, thus spake: " Tradition
tells

That, in Eliza's golden days, a Knight
Came on a war-horse sumptuously attired, 925
And fixed his home in this sequestered vale.

'Tis left untold if here he first drew breath,
Or as a stranger reached this deep recess,
Unknowing and unknown. A pleasing thought
I sometimes entertain, that haply bound 930
To Scotland's court in service of his Queen,
Or sent on mission to some northern Chief
Of England's realm, this vale he might have
seen

With transient observation ; and thence caught
An image fair, which, brightening in his soul 935
When joy of war and pride of chivalry
Languished beneath accumulated years,
Had power to draw him from the world, resolved
To make that paradise his chosen home
To which his peaceful fancy oft had turned. 940

“Vague thoughts are these; but, if belief
may rest
Upon unwritten story fondly traced

From sire to son, in this obscure retreat
The Knight arrived, with spear and shield, and
borne

Upon a Charger gorgeously bedecked 945
With broidered housings. And the lofty Steed—
His sole companion, and his faithful friend,
Whom he, in gratitude, let loose to range
In fertile pastures—was beheld with eyes
Of admiration and delightful awe, 950
By those untravelled Dalesmen. With less
pride,

Yet free from touch of envious discontent,
They saw a mansion at his bidding rise,
Like a bright star, amid the lowly band
Of their rude homesteads. Here the Warrior
dwelt ; 955

And, in that mansion, children of his own,
Or kindred, gathered round him. As a tree
That falls and disappears, the house is gone ;
And, through improvidence or want of love
For ancient worth and honourable things, 960
The spear and shield are vanished, which the
Knight

Hung in his rustic hall. One ivied arch
Myself have seen, a gateway, last remains
Of that foundation in domestic care
Raised by his hands. And now no trace is
left 965

Of the mild-hearted Champion, save this stone,
Faithless memorial ! and his family name
Borne by yon clustering cottages, that sprang
From out the ruins of his stately lodge :
These, and the name and title at full length,—
Sir Alfred Erthing, with appropriate words 971
Accompanied, still extant, in a wreath
Or posy, girding round the several fronts
Of three clear-sounding and harmonious bells,

That in the steeple hang, his pious gift." 975

" So fails, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,"
The grey-haired Wanderer pensively exclaimed,
" All that this world is proud of. From their
spheres

The stars of human glory are cast down ;
Perish the roses and the flowers of kings, 980
Princes, and emperors, and the crowns and
palms

Of all the mighty, withered and consumed !
Nor is power given to lowliest innocence
Long to protect her own. The man himself
Departs ; and soon is spent the line of those 985
Who, in the bodily image, in the mind,
In heart or soul, in station or pursuit,
Did most resemble him. Degrees and ranks,
Fraternities and orders—heaping high
New wealth upon the burthen of the old, 990
And placing trust in privilege confirmed .
And re-confirmed—are scoffed at with a smile
Of greedy foretaste, from the secret stand
Of Desolation, aimed : to slow decline
These yield, and these to sudden overthrow : 995
Their virtue, service, happiness, and state
Expire ; and nature's pleasant robe of green,
Humanity's appointed shroud, enwraps
Their monuments and their memory. The vast
Frame

Of social nature changes evermore 1000
Her organs and her members with decay
Restless, and restless generation, powers
And functions dying and produced at need,—
And by this law the mighty whole subsists :
With an ascent and progress in the main ; 1005
Yet, oh ! how disproportioned to the hopes
And expectations of self-flattering minds !

“The courteous Knight, whose bones are
here interred,

Lived in an age conspicuous as our own
For strife and ferment in the minds of men;
Whence alteration in the forms of things, 1011
Various and vast. A memorable age!

Which did to him assign a pensive lot—
To linger 'mid the last of those bright clouds
That, on the steady breeze of honour, sailed
In long procession calm and beautiful. 1016

He who had seen his own bright order fade,
And its devotion gradually decline,
(While war, relinquishing the lance and shield,
Her temper changed, and bowed to other
laws) 1020

Had also witnessed, in his morn of life,
That violent commotion, which o'erthrew,
In town and city and sequestered glen,
Altar, and cross, and church of solemn roof,
And old religious house—pile after pile; 1025
And shook their tenants out into the fields,
Like wild beasts without home! Their hour
was come;

But why no softening thought of gratitude,
No just remembrance, scruple, or wise doubt?
Benevolence is mild; nor borrows help, 1030
Save at worst need, from bold impetuous
force,

Fitliest allied to anger and revenge.
But Human-kind rejoices in the might
Of mutability; and airy hopes,
Dancing around her, hinder and disturb 1035
Those meditations of the soul that feed
The retrospective virtues. Festive songs
Break from the maddened nations at the sight
Of sudden overthrow; and cold neglect
Is the sure consequence of slow decay. 1040

“ Even,” said the Wanderer, “ as that courteous Knight,
Bound by his vow to labour for redress
Of all who suffer wrong, and to enact
By sword and lance the law of gentleness,
(If I may venture of myself to speak, 1045
Trusting that not incongruously I blend
Low things with lofty) I too shall be doomed
To outlive the kindly use and fair esteem
Of the poor calling which my youth embraced
With no unworthy prospect. But enough;
—Thoughts crowd upon me—and ’twere seem-
lier now 1051
To stop, and yield our gracious Teacher thanks
For the pathetic records which his voice
Hath here delivered ; words of heartfelt truth,
Tending to patience when affliction strikes ;
To hope and love ; to confident repose 1056
In God ; and reverence for the dust of Man.”

BOOK EIGHTH.

THE PARSONAGE.

ARGUMENT.

Pastor's apology and apprehensions that he might have detained his Auditors too long, with the Pastor's invitation to his house—Solitary disinclined to comply—rallies the Wanderer—and playfully draws a comparison between his itinerant profession and that of the Knight-errant—which leads to Wanderer's giving an account of changes in the Country from the manufacturing spirit.—Favourable effects.—The other side of the picture, and chiefly as it has affected the humbler classes.—Wanderer asserts the hollowness of all national grandeur if unsupported by moral worth.—Physical science unable to support itself.—Lamentations over an excess of manufacturing industry among the humbler Classes of Society.—Picture of a Child employed in a Cotton-mill.—Ignorance and degradation of Children among the agricultural Population reviewed.—Conversation broken off by a renewed Invitation from the Pastor.—Path leading to his House.—Its appearance described.—His Daughter.—His Wife.—His Son (a Boy) enters with his Companion.—Their happy appearance.—The Wanderer how affected by the sight of them.

THE PARSONAGE.

THE pensive Sceptic of the lonely vale
To those acknowledgments subscribed his own,
With a sedate compliance, which the Priest
Failed not to notice, inly pleased, and said :—
“ If ye, by whom invited I began 5
These narratives of calm and humble life,
Be satisfied, 'tis well,—the end is gained ;
And in return for sympathy bestowed
And patient listening, thanks accept from me.
—Life, death, eternity ! momentous themes 10
Are they—and might demand a seraph's tongue,
Were they not equal to their own support ;
And therefore no incompetence of mine
Could do them wrong. The universal forms
Of human nature, in a spot like this, 15
Present themselves at once to all men's view :
Ye wished for act and circumstance, that make
The individual known and understood ;
And such as my best judgment could select 19
From what the place afforded, have been given ;
Though apprehensions crossed me that my zeal
To his might well be likened, who unlocks
A cabinet stored with gems and pictures—
draws
His treasures forth, soliciting regard
To this, and this, as worthier than the last, 25
Till the spectator, who awhile was pleased
More than the exhibitor himself, becomes

Weary and faint, and longs to be released.
 —But let us hence! my dwelling is in sight,
 And there—”

At this the Solitary shrunk 30
 With backward will; but, wanting not address
 That inward motion to disguise, he said
 To his Compatriot, smiling as he spake;
 —“The peaceable remains of this good Knight
 Would be disturbed, I fear, with wrathful
 scorn, 35
 If consciousness could reach him where he lies
 That one, albeit of these degenerate times,
 Deploring changes past, or dreading change
 Foreseen, had dared to couple, even in thought,
 The fine vocation of the sword and lance 40
 With the gross aims and body-bending toil
 Of a poor brotherhood who walk the earth
 Pitied, and, where they are not known, despised.

“Yet, by the good Knight’s leave, the two
 estates
 Are graced with some resemblance. Errant
 those, 45
 Exiles and wanderers—and the like are these;
 Who, with their burthen, traverse hill and dale,
 Carrying relief for nature’s simple wants.
 —What though no higher recompense be sought
 Than honest maintenance, by irksome toil 50
 Full oft procured, yet may they claim respect,
 Among the intelligent, for what this course
 Enables them to be and to perform.
 Their tardy steps give leisure to observe,
 While solitude permits the mind to feel; 55
 Instructs, and prompts her to supply defects
 By the division of her inward self
 For grateful converse: and to these poor men
 Nature (I but repeat your favourite boast)

Is bountiful—go wheresoe'er they may ; 60
 Kind nature's various wealth is all their own.
 Versed in the characters of men ; and bound,
 By ties of daily interest, to maintain
 Conciliatory manners and smooth speech ;
 Such have been, and still are in their degree, 65
 Examples efficacious to refine
 Rude intercourse ; apt agents to expel,
 By importation of unlooked-for arts,
 Barbarian torpor, and blind prejudice ;
 Raising, through just gradation, savage life 70
 To rustic, and the rustic to urbane.
 —Within their moving magazines is lodged
 Power that comes forth to quicken and exalt
 Affections seated in the mother's breast,
 And in the lover's fancy ; and to feed 75
 The sober sympathies of long-tried friends.
 —By these Itinerants, as experienced men,
 Counsel is given ; contention they appease
 With gentle language ; in remotest wilds,
 Tears wipe away, and pleasant tidings bring ; 80
 Could the proud quest of chivalry do more ?"

"Happy," rejoined the Wanderer, "they who
 gain
 A panegyric from your generous tongue !
 But, if to these Wayfarers once pertained
 Aught of romantic interest, it is gone. 85
 Their purer service, in this realm at least,
 Is past for ever.—An inventive Age
 Has wrought, if not with speed of magic, yet
 To most strange issues. I have lived to mark
 A new and unforeseen creation rise 90
 From out the labours of a peaceful Land
 Wielding her potent enginery to frame
 And to produce, with appetite as keen
 As that of war, which rests not night or day,

Industrious to destroy ! With fruitless pains 95
 Might one like me *now* visit many a tract
 Which, in his youth, he trod, and trod again,
 A lone pedestrian with a scanty freight,
 Wished-for, or welcome, wheresoe'er he came—
 Among the tenantry of thorpe and vill ; 100
 Or straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
 And dignified by battlements and towers
 Of some stern castle, mouldering on the brow
 Of a green hill or bank of rugged stream.
 The foot-path faintly marked, the horse-track
 wild, 105
 And formidable length of plashy lane,
 (Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
 Or easier links connecting place with place)
 Have vanished—swallowed up by stately roads
 Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom 110
 Of Britain's farthest glens. The Earth has lent
 Her waters, Air her breezes ; and the sail
 Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse,
 Glistening along the low and woody dale ;
 Or, in its progress, on the lofty side, 115
 Of some bare hill, with wonder kenned from
 far.

“ Meanwhile, at social Industry's command,
 How quick, how vast an increase ! From the
 germ
 Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
 Here a huge town, continuous and compact, 120
 Hiding the face of earth for leagues—and there,
 Where not a habitation stood before,
 Abodes of men irregularly massed
 Like trees in forests,—spread through spacious
 tracts,
 O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires 125
 Hangs permanent, and plentiful as wreaths

Of vapour glittering in the morning sun.
 And, wheresoe'er the traveller turns his steps,
 He sees the barren wilderness erased,
 Or disappearing; triumph that proclaims 130
 How much the mild Directress of the plough
 Owes to alliance with these new-born arts!
 —Hence is the wide sea peopled,—hence the
 shores

Of Britain are resorted to by ships
 Freight from every climate of the world 135
 With the world's choicest produce. Hence that
 sum

Of keels that rest within her crowded ports,
 Or ride at anchor in her sounds and bays;
 That animating spectacle of sails
 That, through her inland regions, to and fro
 Pass with the respirations of the tide, 141
 Perpetual, multitudinous! Finally,
 Hence a dread arm of floating power, a voice
 Of thunder daunting those who would ap-
 proach

With hostile purposes the blessed Isle, 145
 Truth's consecrated residence, the seat
 Impregnable of Liberty and Peace.

“And yet, O happy Pastor of a flock
 Faithfully watched, and, by that loving care
 And Heaven's good providence, preserved from
 taint! 150

With you I grieve, when on the darker side
 Of this great change I look; and there be-
 hold

Such outrage done to nature as compels
 The indignant power to justify herself;
 Yea, to avenge her violated rights, 155
 For England's bane.—When soothing darkness
 spreads

O'er hill and vale," the Wanderer thus expressed

His recollections, "and the punctual stars,
While all things else are gathering to their homes,

Advance, and in the firmament of heaven 160

Glitter—but undisturbing, undisturbed ;

As if their silent company were charged

With peaceful admonitions for the heart

Of all-beholding Man, earth's thoughtful lord ;

Then, in full many a region, once like this 165

The assured domain of calm simplicity

And pensive quiet, an unnatural light

Prepared for never-resting Labour's eyes

Breaks from a many-windowed fabric huge ;

And at the appointed hour a bell is heard, 170

Of harsher import than the curfew-knoll

That spake the Norman Conqueror's stern behest—

A local summons to unceasing toil !

Disgorged are now the ministers of day ;

And, as they issue from the illumined pile, 175

A fresh band meets them, at the crowded door—

And in the courts—and where the rumbling stream,

That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,

Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed

Among the rocks below. Men, maidens, youths,

Mother and little children, boys and girls, 181

Enter, and each the wonted task resumes

Within this temple, where is offered up

To Gain, the master idol of the realm,

Perpetual sacrifice. Even thus of old 185

Our ancestors, within the still domain

Of vast cathedral or conventual church,

Their vigils kept ; where tapers day and night

On the dim altar burned continually,
 In token that the House was evermore 190
 Watching to God. Religious men were they ;
 Nor would their reason, tutored to aspire
 Above this transitory world, allow
 That there should pass a moment of the year,
 When in their land the Almighty's service
 ceased. 195

“Triumph who will in these profaner rites
 Which we, a generation self-extolled,
 As zealously perform ! I cannot share
 His proud complacency :—yet do I exult,
 Casting reserve away, exult to see 200
 An intellectual mastery exercised
 O'er the blind elements ; a purpose given,
 A perseverance fed ; almost a soul
 Imparted—to brute matter. I rejoice,
 Measuring the force of those gigantic powers
 That, by the thinking mind, have been com-
 pelled 206
 To serve the will of feeble-bodied Man.
 For with the sense of admiration blends
 The animating hope that time may come
 When, strengthened, yet not dazzled, by the
 might 210
 Of this dominion over nature gained,
 Men of all lands shall exercise the same
 In due proportion to their country's need ;
 Learning, though late, that all true glory rests,
 All praise, all safety, and all happiness, 215
 Upon the moral law. Egyptian Thebes,
 Tyre, by the margin of the sounding waves,
 Palmyra, central in the desert, fell ;
 And the Arts died by which they had been
 raised.
 —Call Archimedes from his buried tomb 220

Upon the grave of vanished Syracuse,
 And feelingly the Sage shall make report
 How insecure, how baseless in itself,
 Is the Philosophy whose sway depends
 On mere material instruments;—how weak 225
 Those arts, and high inventions, if unpropped
 By virtue.—He, sighing with pensive grief,
 Amid his calm abstractions, would admit
 That not the slender privilege is theirs
 To save themselves from blank forgetfulness !”

When from the Wanderer's lips these words
 had fallen, 231
 I said, “ And, did in truth those vaunted Arts
 Possess such privilege, how could we escape
 Sadness and keen regret, we who revere,
 And would preserve as things above all price,
 The old domestic morals of the land, 236
 Her simple manners, and the stable worth
 That dignified and cheered a low estate ?
 Oh ! where is now the character of peace,
 Sobriety, and order, and chaste love, 240
 And honest dealing, and untainted speech,
 And pure good-will, and hospitable cheer ;
 That made the very thought of country-life
 A thought of refuge, for a mind detained
 Reluctantly amid the bustling crowd ? 245
 Where now the beauty of the sabbath kept
 With conscientious reverence, as a day
 By the almighty Lawgiver pronounced
 Holy and blest ? and where the winning grace
 Of all the lighter ornaments attached 250
 To time and season, as the year rolled round ? ”

“ Fled ! ” was the Wanderer's passionate
 response,
 “ Fled utterly ! or only to be traced

In a few fortunate retreats like this ; 254
 Which I behold with trembling, when I think
 What lamentable change, a year—a month—
 May bring ; that brook converting as it runs
 Into an instrument of deadly bane
 For those, who, yet untempted to forsake
 The simple occupations of their sires, 260
 Drink the pure water of its innocent stream
 With lip almost as pure.—Domestic bliss
 (Or call it comfort, by a humbler name,)
 How art thou blighted for the poor Man's
 heart !

Lo ! in such neighbourhood, from morn to eve,
 The habitations empty ! or perchance 266
 The Mother left alone,—no helping hand
 To rock the cradle of her peevish babe ;
 No daughters round her, busy at the wheel,
 Or in dispatch of each day's little growth 270
 Of household occupation ; no nice arts
 Of needle-work ; no bustle at the fire,
 Where once the dinner was prepared with
 pride ;
 Nothing to speed the day, or cheer the mind ;
 Nothing to praise, to teach, or to command !

“ The Father, if perchance he still retain 276
 His old employments, goes to field or wood,
 No longer led or followed by the Sons ;
 Idlers perchance they were,—but in *his* sight ;
 Breathing fresh air, and treading the green
 earth ; 280
 'Till their short holiday of childhood ceased,
 Ne'er to return ! That birthright now is lost.
 Economists will tell you that the State
 Thrives by the forfeiture—unfeeling thought,
 And false as monstrous ! Can the mother
 thrive 285

By the destruction of her innocent sons
In whom a premature necessity
Blocks out the forms of nature, preconsumes
The reason, famishes the heart, shuts up
The infant Being in itself, and makes 290
Its very spring a season of decay!
The lot is wretched, the condition sad,
Whether a pining discontent survive,
And thirst for change; or habit hath subdued
The soul deprest, dejected—even to love 295
Of her close tasks, and long captivity.

“ Oh, banish far such wisdom as condemns
A native Briton to these inward chains,
Fixed in his soul, so early and so deep;
Without his own consent, or knowledge, fixed!
He is a slave to whom release comes not, 301
And cannot come. The boy, where'er he turns,
Is still a prisoner; when the wind is up
Among the clouds, and roars through the
ancient woods;
Or when the sun is shining in the east, 305
Quiet and calm. Behold him—in the school
Of his attainments? no; but with the air
Fanning his temples under heaven's blue arch.
His raiment, whitened o'er with cotton-flakes
Or locks of wool, announces whence he comes.
Creeping his gait and cowering, his lip pale,
His respiration quick and audible; 312
And scarcely could you fancy that a gleam
Could break from out those languid eyes, or a
blush
Mantle upon his cheek. Is this the form, 315
Is that the countenance, and such the port,
Of no mean Being? One who should be clothed
With dignity befitting his proud hope;
Who, in his very childhood, should appear

Sublime from present purity and joy ! 320
 The limbs increase ; but liberty of mind
 Is gone for ever ; and this organic frame,
 So joyful in its motions, is become
 Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead ;
 And even the touch, so exquisitely poured 325
 Through the whole body, with a languid will
 Performs its functions ; rarely competent
 To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
 Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
 The gentle visitations of the sun, 330
 Or lapse of liquid element—by hand,
 Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth—perceived.
 —Can hope look forward to a manhood raised
 On such foundations ? ”

“ Hope is none for him ! ”

The pale Recluse indignantly exclaimed, 335
 “ And tens of thousands suffer wrong as deep.
 Yet be it asked, in justice to our age,
 If there were not, before those arts appeared,
 These structures rose, commingling old and
 young,
 And unripe sex with sex, for mutual taint ; 340
 If there were not, *then*, in our far-famed Isle,
 Multitudes, who from infancy had breathed
 Air unimprisoned, and had lived at large ;
 Yet walked beneath the sun, in human shape,
 As abject, as degraded ? At this day, 345
 Who shall enumerate the crazy huts
 And tottering hovels, whence do issue forth
 A ragged Offspring, with their upright hair
 Crowned like the image of fantastic Fear ;
 Or wearing, (shall we say ?) in that white
 growth 350
 An ill-adjusted turban, for defence
 Or fierceness, wreathed around their sun-burnt
 brows,

By savage Nature? Shrivelled are their lips;
 Naked, and coloured like the soil, the feet 354
 On which they stand; as if thereby they drew
 Some nourishment, as trees do by their roots,
 From earth, the common mother of us all.
 Figure and mien, complexion and attire,
 Are leagued to strike dismay; but outstretched
 hand

And whining voice denote them supplicants 360
 For the least boon that pity can bestow.
 Such on the breast of darksome heaths are
 found;

And with their parents occupy the skirts
 Of furze-clad commons; such are born and
 reared 364

At the mine's mouth under impending rocks;
 Or dwell in chambers of some natural cave;
 Or where their ancestors erected huts,
 For the convenience of unlawful gain,
 In forest purlieus; and the like are bred,
 All England through, where nooks and slips
 of ground 370

Purloined, in times less jealous than our own,
 From the green margin of the public way,
 A residence afford them, 'mid the bloom
 And gaiety of cultivated fields.

Such (we will hope the lowest in the scale) 375
 Do I remember oft-times to have seen
 'Mid Buxton's dreary heights. In earnest watch,
 Till the swift vehicle approach, they stand;
 Then, following closely with the cloud of dust,
 An uncouth feat exhibit, and are gone 380
 Heels over head, like tumblers on a stage.

—Up from the ground they snatch the copper
 coin,

And, on the freight of merry passengers
 Fixing a steady eye, maintain their speed;

And spin—and pant—and overhead again, 385
 Wild pursuivants! until their breath is lost,
 Or bounty tires—and every face, that smiled
 Encouragement, hath ceased to look that way.
 —But, like the vagrants of the gipsy tribe,
 These, bred to little pleasure in themselves, 390
 Are profitless to others.

Turn we then
 To Britons born and bred within the pale
 Of civil polity, and early trained
 To earn, by wholesome labour in the field,
 The bread they eat. A sample should I give 395
 Of what this stock hath long produced to enrich
 The tender age of life, ye would exclaim,
 ‘Is this the whistling plough-boy whose shrill
 notes

Impart new gladness to the morning air!’
 Forgive me if I venture to suspect 400
 That many, sweet to hear of in soft verse,
 Are of no finer frame. Stiff are his joints;
 Beneath a cumbrous frock, that to the knees
 Invests the thriving churl, his legs appear,
 Fellows to those that lustily upheld 405
 The wooden stools for everlasting use,
 Whereon our fathers sate. And mark his brow!
 Under whose shaggy canopy are set
 Two eyes—not dim, but of a healthy stare—
 Wide, sluggish, blank, and ignorant, and
 strange— 410

Proclaiming boldly that they never drew
 A look or motion of intelligence
 From infant-conning of the Christ-cross-row,
 Or puzzling through a primer, line by line,
 Till perfect mastery crown the pains at last. 415
 —What kindly warmth from touch of fostering
 hand,
 What penetrating power of sun or breeze,

Shall e'er dissolve the crust wherein his soul
 Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheathed in ice?
 This torpor is no pitiable work 420
 Of modern ingenuity; no town
 Nor crowded city can be taxed with aught
 Of sottish vice or desperate breach of law,
 To which (and who can tell where or how
 soon?)
 He may be roused. This Boy the fields pro-
 duce: 425
 His spade and hoe, mattock and glittering
 scythe,
 The carter's whip that on his shoulder rests
 In air high-towering with a boorish pomp,
 The sceptre of his sway; his country's name,
 Her equal rights, her churches and her
 schools— 430
 What have they done for him? And, let me
 ask,
 For tens of thousands uninformed as he?
 In brief, what liberty of *mind* is here? ”

This ardent sally pleased the mild good Man,
 To whom the appeal couched in its closing
 words 435
 Was pointedly addressed; and to the thoughts
 That, in assent or opposition, rose
 Within his mind, he seemed prepared to give
 Prompt utterance; but the Vicar interposed
 With invitation urgently renewed. 440
 —We followed, taking as he led, a path
 Along a hedge of hollies dark and tall,
 Whose flexile boughs low bending with a
 weight
 Of leafy spray, concealed the stems and roots
 That gave them nourishment. When frosty
 winds 445

Howl from the north, what kindly warmth,
methought,
Is here—how grateful this impervious screen !
—Not shaped by simple wearing of the foot
On rural business passing to and fro
Was the commodious walk : a careful hand 450
Had marked the line, and strewn its surface o'er
With pure cerulean gravel, from the heights
Fetched by a neighbouring brook.—Across the
vale
The stately fence accompanied our steps ;
And thus the pathway, by perennial green 455
Guarded and graced, seemed fashioned to unite,
As by a beautiful yet solemn chain,
The Pastor's mansion with the house of prayer.

Like image of solemnity, conjoined
With feminine allurements soft and fair, 460
The mansion's self displayed ;—a reverend pile
With bold projections and recesses deep ;
Shadowy, yet gay and lightsome as it stood
Fronting the noontide sun. We paused to
admire
The pillared porch, elaborately embossed ; 465
The low wide windows with their mullions old ;
The cornice, richly fretted, of grey stone ;
And that smooth slope from which the dwelling
rose,
By beds and banks Arcadian of gay flowers
And flowering shrubs, protected and adorned :
Profusion bright ! and every flower assuming
A more than natural vividness of hue, 472
From unaffected contrast with the gloom
Of sober cypress, and the darker foil
Of yew, in which survived some traces, here 475
Not unbecoming, of grotesque device
And uncouth fancy. From behind the roof

Rose the slim ash and massy sycamore,
 Blending their diverse foliage with the green
 Of ivy, flourishing and thick, that clasped 480
 The huge round chimneys, harbour of delight
 For wren and redbreast,—where they sit and
 sing

Their slender ditties when the trees are bare.
 Nor must I leave untouched (the picture else
 Were incomplete) a relique of old times 485
 Happily spared, a little Gothic niche
 Of nicest workmanship ; that once had held
 The sculptured image of some patron-saint,
 Or of the blessed Virgin, looking down
 On all who entered those religious doors. 490

But lo ! where from the rocky garden-mount
 Crowned by its antique summer-house—de-
 scends,

Light as the silver fawn, a radiant Girl ;
 For she hath recognised her honoured friend,
 The Wanderer ever welcome ! A prompt kiss
 The gladsome child bestows at his request ; 496
 And, up the flowery lawn as we advance,
 Hangs on the old Man with a happy look,
 And with a pretty restless hand of love.

—We enter—by the Lady of the place 500
 Cordially greeted. Graceful was her port :
 A lofty stature undepressed by time,
 Whose visitation had not wholly spared
 The finer lineaments of form and face ;
 To that complexion brought which prudence
 trusts in 505

And wisdom loves.—But when a stately ship
 Sails in smooth weather by the placid coast
 On homeward voyage,—what if wind and wave,
 And hardship undergone in various climes,
 Have caused her to abate the virgin pride, 510

And that full trim of inexperienced hope
 With which she left her haven—not for this,
 Should the sun strike her, and the impartial
 breeze

Play on her streamers, fails she to assume
 Brightness and touching beauty of her own, 515
 That charm all eyes. So bright, so fair, appeared
 This goodly Matron, shining in the beams
 Of unexpected pleasure.—Soon the board
 Was spread, and we partook a plain repast.

Here, resting in cool shelter, we beguiled 520
 The mid-day hours with desultory talk ;
 From trivial themes to general argument
 Passing, as accident or fancy led,
 Or courtesy prescribed. While question rose
 And answer flowed, the fetters of reserve 525
 Dropping from every mind, the Solitary
 Resumed the manners of his happier days ;
 And in the various conversation bore
 A willing, nay, at times, a forward part ;
 Yet with the grace of one who in the world 530
 Had learned the art of pleasing, and had now
 Occasion given him to display his skill,
 Upon the steadfast 'vantage-ground of truth.
 He gazed, with admiration unsuppressed,
 Upon the landscape of the sun-bright vale, 535
 Seen, from the shady room in which we sate,
 In softened perspective ; and more than once
 Praised the consummate harmony serene
 Of gravity and elegance, diffused
 Around the mansion and its whole domain ; 540
 Not, doubtless, without help of female taste
 And female care.—“ A blessed lot is yours ! ”
 The words escaped his lip, with a tender sigh
 Breathed over them : but suddenly the door
 Flew open, and a pair of lusty Boys 545

Appeared, confusion checking their delight.
—Not brothers they in feature or attire,
But fond companions, so I guessed, in field,
And by the river's margin—whence they come,
Keen anglers with unusual spoil elated. 550
One bears a willow-pannier on his back,
The boy of plainer garb, whose blush survives
More deeply tinged. Twin might the other be
To that fair girl who from the garden-mount
Bounded :—triumphant entry this for him ! 555
Between his hands he holds a smooth blue stone,
On whose capacious surface see outspread
Large store of gleaming crimson-spotted trouts;
Ranged side by side, and lessening by degrees
Up to the dwarf that tops the pinnacle. 560
Upon the board he lays the sky-blue stone
With its rich freight; their number he pro-
claims ;
Tells from what pool the noblest had been
dragged ;
And where the very monarch of the brook,
After long struggle, had escaped at last— 565
Stealing alternately at them and us
(As doth his comrade too) a look of pride :
And, verily, the silent creatures made
A splendid sight, together thus exposed ;
Dead—but not sullied or deformed by death, 570
That seemed to pity what he could not spare.

But O, the animation in the mien
Of those two boys ! yea in the very words
With which the young narrator was inspired,
When, as our questions led, he told at large 575
Of that day's prowess ! Him might I compare,
His looks, tones, gestures, eager eloquence,
To a bold brook that splits for better speed,
And at the self-same moment, works its way

Through many channels, ever and anon 580
 Parted and re-united: his compeer
 To the still lake, whose stillness is to sight
 As beautiful—as grateful to the mind.
 —But to what object shall the lovely Girl
 Be likened? She whose countenance and air
 Unite the graceful qualities of both, 586
 Even as she shares the pride and joy of both.

My grey-haired Friend was moved; his vivid
 eye
 Glistened with tenderness; his mind, I knew,
 Was full; and had, I doubted not, returned,
 Upon this impulse, to the theme—erewhile 591
 Abruptly broken off. The ruddy boys
 Withdrew, on summons to their well-earned
 meal;
 And He—to whom all tongues reserved their
 rights
 With willingness, to whom the general ear 595
 Listened with readier patience than to strain
 Of music, lute or harp, a long delight
 That ceased not when his voice had ceased—as
 One
 Who from truth's central point serenely views
 The compass of his argument—began 600
 Mildly, and with a clear and steady tone.

BOOK NINTH.

DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER,
AND AN EVENING VISIT
TO THE LAKE.

ARGUMENT.

Wanderer asserts that an active principle pervades the Universe, its noblest seat the human soul.—How lively this principle is in Childhood.—Hence the delight in old Age of looking back upon Childhood.—The dignity, powers, and privileges of Age asserted.—These not to be looked for generally but under a just government.—Right of a human Creature to be exempt from being considered as a mere Instrument.—The condition of multitudes deplored.—Former conversation recurred to, and the Wanderer's opinions set in a clearer light.—Truth placed within reach of the humblest.—Equality.—Happy state of the two Boys again adverted to.—Earnest wish expressed for a System of National Education established universally by Government.—Glorious effects of this foretold.—Walk to the Lake.—Grand spectacle from the side of a hill.—Address of Priest to the Supreme Being—in the course of which he contrasts with ancient Barbarism the present appearance of the scene before him.—The change ascribed to Christianity.—Apostrophe to his flock, living and dead.—Gratitude to the Almighty.—Return over the Lake.—Parting with the Solitary.—Under what circumstances.

DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER,
AND AN EVENING VISIT TO
THE LAKE.

“To every Form of being is assigned,”
Thus calmly spake the venerable Sage,
“An *active* Principle :—howe’er removed
From sense and observation, it subsists
In all things, in all natures ; in the stars 5
Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
The moving waters, and the invisible air.
Whate’er exists hath properties that spread 10
Beyond itself, communicating good,
A simple blessing, or with evil mixed ;
Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude ; from link to link
It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds. 15
This is the freedom of the universe ;
Unfolded still the more, more visible,
The more we know ; and yet is revered least,
And least respected in the human Mind,
Its most apparent home. The food of hope 20
Is meditated action ; robbed of this
Her sole support, she languishes and dies.
We perish also ; for we live by hope
And by desire ; we see by the glad light
And breathe the sweet air of futurity ; 25

And so we live, or else we have no life.
To-morrow—nay perchance this very hour
(For every moment hath its own to-morrow!)
Those blooming Boys, whose hearts are almost
sick

With present triumph, will be sure to find 30
A field before them freshened with the dew
Of other expectations;—in which course
Their happy year spins round. The youth
obeys

A like glad impulse; and so moves the man
'Mid all his apprehensions, cares, and fears,—
Or so he ought to move. Ah! why in age 36
Do we revert so fondly to the walks
Of childhood—but that there the Soul discerns
The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
Of her own native vigour; thence can hear 40
Reverberations; and a choral song,
Commingling with the incense that ascends,
Undaunted, toward the imperishable heavens,
From her own lonely altar?

Do not think
That good and wise ever will be allowed, 45
Though strength decay, to breathe in such
estate

As shall divide them wholly from the stir
Of hopeful nature. Rightly it is said
That Man descends into the VALE of years;
Yet have I thought that we might also speak,
And not presumptuously, I trust, of Age, 51
As of a final EMINENCE; though bare
In aspect and forbidding, yet a point
On which 'tis not impossible to sit
In awful sovereignty; a place of power, 55
A throne, that may be likened unto his,
Who, in some placid day of summer, looks
Down from a mountain-top,—say one of those

High peaks, that bound the vale where now we
are.

Faint, and diminished to the gazing eye, 60

Forest and field, and hill and dale appear,

With all the shapes over their surface spread :

But, while the gross and visible frame of things

Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,

Yea almost on the Mind herself, and seems 65

All unsubstantialized,—how loud the voice

Of waters, with invigorated peal

From the full river in the vale below,

Ascending ! For on that superior height

Who sits, is disencumbered from the press 70

Of near obstructions, and is privileged

To breathe in solitude, above the host

Of ever-humming insects, 'mid thin air

That suits not them. The murmur of the
leaves

Many and idle, visits not his ear : 75

This he is freed from, and from thousand notes

(Not less unceasing, not less vain than these,)

By which the finer passages of sense

Are occupied ; and the Soul, that would incline

To listen, is prevented or deterred. 80

“ And may it not be hoped, that, placed by
age

In like removal, tranquil though severe,

We are not so removed for utter loss ;

But for some favour, suited to our need ?

What more than that the severing should

confer 85

Fresh power to commune with the invisible
world,

And hear the mighty stream of tendency

Uttering, for elevation of our thought,

A clear sonorous voice, inaudible

To the vast multitude; whose doom it is 90
To run the giddy round of vain delight,
Or fret and labour on the Plain below.

“ But, if to such sublime ascent the hopes
Of Man may rise, as to a welcome close
And termination of his mortal course ; 95
Them only can such hope inspire whose minds
Have not been starved by absolute neglect ;
Nor bodies crushed by unremitting toil ;
To whom kind Nature, therefore, may afford
Proof of the sacred love she bears for all ; 100
Whose birthright Reason, therefore, may ensure.
For me, consulting what I feel within
In times when most existence with herself
Is satisfied, I cannot but believe,
That, far as kindly Nature hath free scope 105
And Reason's sway predominates ; even so far,
Country, society, and time itself,
That saps the individual's bodily frame,
And lays the generations low in dust,
Do, by the almighty Ruler's grace, partake 110
Of one maternal spirit, bringing forth
And cherishing with ever-constant love,
That tires not, nor betrays. Our life is turned
Out of her course, wherever man is made
An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool 115
Or implement, a passive thing employed
As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
Of common right or interest in the end ;
Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt.
Say, what can follow for a rational soul 120
Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
And strength in evil ? Hence an after-call
For chastisement, and custody, and bonds,
And oft-times Death, avenger of the past,
And the sole guardian in whose hands we dare

Entrust the future.—Not for these sad issues 126
 Was Man created; but to obey the law
 Of life, and hope, and action. And 'tis known
 That when we stand upon our native soil,
 Unelbowed by such objects as oppress 130
 Our active powers, those powers themselves
 become

Strong to subvert our noxious qualities :
 They sweep distemper from the busy day,
 And make the chalice of the big round year
 Run o'er with gladness; whence the Being
 moves 135
 In beauty through the world; and all who see
 Bless him, rejoicing in his neighbourhood."

"Then," said the Solitary, "by what force
 Of language shall a feeling heart express
 Her sorrow for that multitude in whom 140
 We look for health from seeds that have been
 sown

In sickness, and for increase in a power
 That works but by extinction? On themselves
 They cannot lean, nor turn to their own hearts
 To know what they must do; their wisdom is
 To look into the eyes of others, thence 146
 To be instructed what they must avoid:
 Or rather, let us say, how least observed
 How with most quiet and most silent death,
 With the least taint and injury to the air 150
 The oppressor breathes, their human form
 divine,
 And their immortal soul, may waste away."

The Sage rejoined, "I thank you—you have
 spared
 My voice the utterance of a keen regret,
 A wide compassion which with you I share. 155

When, heretofore, I placed before your sight
A Little-one, subjected to the arts
Of modern ingenuity, and made
The senseless member of a vast machine,
Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel; 160
Think not, that, pitying him, I could forget
The rustic Boy, who walks the fields, untaught;
The slave of ignorance, and oft of want,
And miserable hunger. Much, too much,
Of this unhappy lot, in early youth 165
We both have witnessed, lot which I myself
Shared, though in mild and merciful degree:
Yet was the mind to hinderances exposed,
Through which I struggled, not without distress
And sometimes injury, like a lamb enthralled
'Mid thorns and brambles; or a bird that
breaks 171
Through a strong net, and mounts upon the
wind,
Though with her plumes impaired. If they,
whose souls
Should open while they range the richer fields
Of merry England, are obstructed less 175
By indigence, their ignorance is not less,
Nor less to be deplored. For who can doubt
That tens of thousands at this day exist
Such as the boy you painted, lineal heirs
Of those who once were vassals of her soil, 180
Following its fortunes like the beasts or trees
Which it sustained. But no one takes delight
In this oppression; none are proud of it;
It bears no sounding name, nor ever bore;
A standing grievance, an indigenous vice 185
Of every country under heaven. My thoughts
Were turned to evils that are new and chosen,
A bondage lurking under shape of good,—
Arts, in themselves beneficent and kind,

But all too fondly followed and too far ;— 190
 To victims, which the merciful can see
 Nor think that they are victims—turned to
 wrongs,

By women, who have children of their own,
 Beheld without compassion, yea with praise !
 I spake of mischief by the wise diffused 195
 With gladness, thinking that the more it spreads
 The healthier, the securer, we become ;
 Delusion which a moment may destroy !
 Lastly I mourned for those whom I had seen
 Corrupted and cast down, on favoured ground,
 Where circumstance and nature had combined
 To shelter innocence, and cherish love ; 202
 Who, but for this intrusion, would have lived,
 Possessed of health, and strength, and peace of
 mind ;
 Thus would have lived, or never have been
 born. 205

“ Alas ! what differs more than man from
 man !

And whence that difference ? Whence but from
 himself ?

For see the universal Race endowed
 With the same upright form !—The sun is fixed,
 And the infinite magnificence of heaven 210
 Fixed, within reach of every human eye ;
 The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears ;
 The vernal field infuses fresh delight
 Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense,
 Even as an object is sublime or fair, 215
 That object is laid open to the view
 Without reserve or veil ; and as a power
 Is salutary, or an influence sweet,
 Are each and all enabled to perceive
 That power, that influence, by impartial law.

Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all ; 221
Reason, and, with that reason, smiles and tears ;
Imagination, freedom in the will ;
Conscience to guide and check ; and death to be
Foretasted, immortality conceived 225

By all,—a blissful immortality,
To them whose holiness on earth shall make
The Spirit capable of heaven, assured.
Strange, then, nor less than monstrous, might
be deemed

The failure, if the Almighty, to this point 230
Liberal and undistinguishing, should hide
The excellence of moral qualities
From common understanding ; leaving truth
And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark ;
Hard to be won, and only by a few ; 235
Strange, should He deal herein with nice re-
spects,

And frustrate all the rest ! Believe it not :
The primal duties shine aloft—like stars ;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers.
The generous inclination, the just rule, 241
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure
thoughts—

No mystery is here ! Here is no boon
For high—yet not for low ; for proudly graced—
Yet not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
To heaven as lightly from the cottage-hearth
As from the haughtiest palace. He, whose
soul 247

Ponders this true equality, may walk
The fields of earth with gratitude and hope ;
Yet, in that meditation, will he find 250
Motive to sadder grief, as we have found ;
Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown,
And for the injustice grieving, that hath made

So wide a difference between man and man.

“Then let us rather fix our gladdened
 thoughts 255
 Upon the brighter scene. How blest that pair
 Of blooming Boys (whom we beheld even now)
 Blest in their several and their common lot !
 A few short hours of each returning day
 The thriving prisoners of their village-school :
 And thence let loose, to seek their pleasant
 homes 261
 Or range the grassy lawn in vacancy ;
 To breathe and to be happy, run and shout
 Idle,—but no delay, no harm, no loss ;
 For every genial power of heaven and earth, 265
 Through all the seasons of the changeful year,
 Obsequiously doth take upon herself
 To labour for them ; bringing each in turn
 The tribute of enjoyment, knowledge, health,
 Beauty, or strength ! Such privilege is theirs,
 Granted alike in the outset of their course 271
 To both ; and, if that partnership must cease,
 I grieve not,” to the Pastor here he turned,
 “Much as I glory in that child of yours,
 Repine not for his cottage-comrade, whom 275
 Belike no higher destiny awaits
 Than the old hereditary wish fulfilled ;
 The wish for liberty to live—content
 With what Heaven grants, and die—in peace
 of mind,
 Within the bosom of his native vale. 280
 At least, whatever fate the noon of life
 Reserves for either, sure it is that both
 Have been permitted to enjoy the dawn ;
 Whether regarded as a jocund time,
 That in itself may terminate, or lead 285
 In course of nature to a sober eve.

Both have been fairly dealt with; looking
back

They will allow that justice has in them
Been shown, alike to body and to mind."

He paused, as if revolving in his soul 290
Some weighty matter; then, with fervent voice
And an impassioned majesty, exclaimed—

"O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizing knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this imperial Realm, 295
While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey;
Binding herself by statute to secure
For all the children whom her soil maintains
The rudiments of letters, and inform 301
The mind with moral and religious truth,
Both understood and practised,—so that none,
However destitute, be left to droop
By timely culture unsustained; or run 305
Into a wild disorder; or be forced
To drudge through a weary life without the
help
Of intellectual implements and tools;
A savage horde among the civilised,
A servile band among the lordly free! 310
This sacred right, the lisping babe proclaims
To be inherent in him, by Heaven's will,
For the protection of his innocence;
And the rude boy—who, having overpast
The sinless age, by conscience is enrolled, 315
Yet mutinously knits his angry brow,
And lifts his wilful hand on mischief bent,
Or turns the godlike faculty of speech
'To impious use—by process indirect

Declares his due, while he makes known his
need. 320

—This sacred right is fruitlessly announced,
This universal plea in vain addressed,
To eyes and ears of parents who themselves
Did, in the time of their necessity, 324
Urge it in vain; and, therefore, like a prayer
That from the humblest floor ascends to heaven,
It mounts to reach the State's parental ear;
Who, if indeed she own a mother's heart,
And be not most unfeelingly devoid
Of gratitude to Providence, will grant 330
The unquestionable good — which, England,
safe

From interference of external force,
May grant at leisure; without risk incurred
That what in wisdom for herself she doth,
Others shall e'er be able to undo. 335

“Look! and behold, from Calpe's sunburnt
cliffs

To the flat margin of the Baltic sea,
Long-reverenced titles cast away as weeds;
Laws overturned; and territory split,
Like fields of ice rent by the polar wind, 340
And forced to join in less obnoxious shapes
Which, ere they gain consistence, by a gust
Of the same breath are shattered and destroyed.
Meantime the sovereignty of these fair Isles
Remains entire and indivisible: 345
And, if that ignorance were removed, which
breeds

Within the compass of their several shores
Dark discontent, or loud commotion, each
Might still preserve the beautiful repose
Of heavenly bodies shining in their spheres. 350
—The discipline of slavery is unknown

Among us,—hence the more do we require
 The discipline of virtue ; order else
 Cannot subsist, nor confidence, nor peace.
 Thus, duties rising out of good possest 355
 And prudent caution needful to avert
 Impending evil, equally require
 That the whole people should be taught and
 trained.
 So shall licentiousness and black resolve
 Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take 360
 Their place ; and genuine piety descend,
 Like an inheritance, from age to age.

“ With such foundations laid, avaunt the fear
 Of numbers crowded on their native soil,
 To the prevention of all healthful growth 365
 Through mutual injury ! Rather in the law
 Of increase and the mandate from above
 Rejoice !—and ye have special cause for joy.
 —For, as the element of air affords
 An easy passage to the industrious bees 370
 Fraught with their burthens ; and a way as
 smooth
 For those ordained to take their sounding flight
 From the thronged hive, and settle where they
 list
 In fresh abodes—their labour to renew ;
 So the wide waters, open to the power, 375
 The will, the instincts, and appointed needs
 Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
 Her swarms, and in succession send them forth ;
 Bound to establish new communities
 On every shore whose aspect favours hope 380
 Or bold adventure ; promising to skill
 And perseverance their deserved reward.

“ Yes,” he continued, kindling as he spake,

“ Change wide, and deep, and silently per-
formed, 384

This Land shall witness ; and as days roll on,
Earth’s universal frame shall feel the effect ;
Even till the smallest habitable rock,
Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
Of humanised society ; and bloom
With civil arts, that shall breathe forth their
fragrance, 390

A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven.
From culture, unexclusively bestowed
On Albion’s noble Race in freedom born,
Expect these mighty issues : from the pains
And faithful care of unambitious schools 395
Instructing simple childhood’s ready ear :
Thence look for these magnificent results !
—Vast the circumference of hope—and ye
Are at its centre, British Lawgivers ;
Ah ! sleep not there in shame ! Shall Wisdom’s
voice 400

From out the bosom of these troubled times
Repeat the dictates of her calmer mind,
And shall the venerable halls ye fill
Refuse to echo the sublime decree ?
Trust not to partial care a general good ; 405
Transfer not to futurity a work
Of urgent need.—Your Country must complete
Her glorious destiny. Begin even now,
Now, when oppression, like the Egyptian
plague
Of darkness, stretched o’er guilty Europe,
makes 410

The brightness more conspicuous that invests
The happy Island where ye think and act ;
Now, when destruction is a prime pursuit,
Show to the wretched nations for what end
The powers of civil polity were given.” 415

Abruptly here, but with a graceful air,
The Sage broke off. No sooner had he ceased
Than, looking forth, the gentle Lady said,
“Behold the shades of afternoon have fallen
Upon this flowery slope; and see—beyond— 420
The silvery lake is streaked with placid blue;
As if preparing for the peace of evening.
How temptingly the landscape shines! The air
Breathes invitation; easy is the walk
To the lake’s margin, where a boat lies moored
Under a sheltering tree.”—Upon this hint 426
We rose together: all were pleased; but most
The beauteous girl, whose cheek was flushed
with joy.

Light as a sunbeam glides along the hills
She vanished—eager to impart the scheme 430
To her loved brother and his shy compeer.
—Now was there bustle in the Vicar’s house
And earnest preparation.—Forth we went,
And down the vale along the streamlet’s edge
Pursued our way, a broken company, 435
Mute or conversing, single or in pairs.
Thus having reached a bridge, that overarched
The hasty rivulet where it lay becalmed
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A two-fold image; on a grassy bank 440
A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same! Most beautiful,
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathèd horns superb,
The breathing creature stood; as beautiful, 445
Beneath him, shewed his shadowy counterpart.
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
And each seemed centre of his own fair world:
Antipodes unconscious of each other,
Yet, in partition, with their several spheres, 450
Blended in perfect stillness, to our sight!

“ Ah ! what a pity were it to disperse,
Or to disturb, so fair a spectacle,
And yet a breath can do it ! ”

These few words

The Lady whispered, while we stood and
gazed 455

Gathered together, all in still delight,
Not without awe. Thence passing on, she said
In like low voice to my particular ear,

“ I love to hear that eloquent old Man
Pour forth his meditations, and descant 460
On human life from infancy to age.

How pure his spirit ! in what vivid hues
His mind gives back the various forms of things,
Caught in their fairest, happiest, attitude !

While he is speaking, I have power to see 465
Even as he sees ; but when his voice hath
ceased,

Then, with a sigh, sometimes I feel, as now,
That combinations so serene and bright
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
Whose highest beauty, beautiful as it is, 470

Like that reflected in yon quiet pool,
Seems but a fleeting sun-beam's gift, whose
peace

The sufferance only of a breath of air ! ”

More had she said—but sportive shouts were
heard

Sent from the jocund hearts of those two
Boys, 475

Who, bearing each a basket on his arm,
Down the green field came tripping after us.
With caution we embarked ; and now the pair
For prouder service were addrest ; but each,
Wishful to leave an opening for my choice, 480
Dropped the light oar his eager hand had seized.

Thanks given for that becoming courtesy,
 Their place I took—and for a grateful office
 Pregnant with recollections of the time
 When, on thy bosom, spacious Windermere! 485
 A Youth, I practised this delightful art;
 Tossed on the waves alone, or 'mid a crew
 Of joyous comrades. Soon as the reedy marge
 Was cleared, I dipped, with arms accordant, oars
 Free from obstruction; and the boat advanced
 Through crystal water, smoothly as a hawk, 491
 That, disentangled from the shady boughs
 Of some thick wood, her place of covert, cleaves
 With correspondent wings the abyss of air.
 —“Observe,” the Vicar said, “yon rocky isle 495
 With birch-trees fringed; my hand shall guide
 the helm,
 While thitherward we shape our course; or
 while
 We seek that other, on the western shore;
 Where the bare columns of those lofty firs,
 Supporting gracefully a massy dome 500
 Of sombre foliage, seem to imitate
 A Grecian temple rising from the Deep.”

“Turn where we may,” said I, “we cannot
 err
 In this delicious region.”—Cultured slopes,
 Wild tracts of forest-ground, and scattered
 groves, 505
 And mountains bare, or clothed with ancient
 woods,
 Surrounded us; and, as we held our way
 Along the level of the glassy flood,
 They ceased not to surround us; change of place,
 From kindred features diversely combined, 510
 Producing change of beauty ever new.
 —Ah! that such beauty, varying in the light

Of living nature, cannot be portrayed
 By words, nor by the pencil's silent skill ;
 But is the property of him alone 515
 Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
 And in his mind recorded it with love !
 Suffice it, therefore, if the rural Muse
 Vouchsafe sweet influence, while her Poet
 speaks
 Of trivial occupations well devised, 520
 And unsought pleasures springing up by
 chance ;
 As if some friendly Genius had ordained
 That, as the day thus far had been enriched
 By acquisition of sincere delight,
 The same should be continued to its close. 525

One spirit animating old and young,
 A gipsy-fire we kindled on the shore
 Of the fair Isle with birch-trees fringed—and
 there,
 Merrily seated in a ring, partook
 A choice repast—served by our young com-
 panions 530
 With rival earnestness and kindred glee.
 Launched from our hands the smooth stone
 skimmed the lake ;
 With shouts we raised the echoes ;—stiller
 sounds
 The lovely Girl supplied—a simple song,
 Whose low tones reached not to the distant
 rocks 535
 To be repeated thence, but gently sank
 Into our hearts ; and charmed the peaceful
 flood.
 Rapaciously we gathered flowery spoils
 From land and water ; lilies of each hue—
 Golden and white, that float upon the waves, 540

And court the wind; and leaves of that shy
 plant,
 (Her flowers were shed) the lily of the vale,
 That loves the ground, and from the sun with-
 holds
 Her pensive beauty; from the breeze her sweets.

Such product, and such pastime, did the
 place 545
 And season yield; but, as we re-embarked,
 Leaving, in quest of other scenes, the shore
 Of that wild spot, the Solitary said
 In a low voice, yet careless who might hear,
 "The fire, that burned so brightly to our wish,
 Where is it now?—Deserted on the beach— 551
 Dying, or dead! Nor shall the fanning breeze
 Revive its ashes. What care we for this,
 Whose ends are gained? Behold an emblem
 here
 Of one day's pleasure, and all mortal joys! 555
 And, in this unpremeditated slight
 Of that which is no longer needed, see
 The common course of human gratitude!"

This plaintive note disturbed not the repose
 Of the still evening. Right across the lake 560
 Our pinnacle moves; then, coasting creek and
 bay,
 Glades we behold, and into thickets peep,
 Where couch the spotted deer; or raised our
 eyes
 To shaggy steeps on which the careless goat
 Browsed by the side of dashing waterfalls; 565
 And thus the bark, meandering with the
 shore,
 Pursued her voyage, till a natural pier
 Of jutting rock invited us to land.

Alert to follow as the Pastor led,
 We clomb a green hill's side ; and, as we clomb,
 The Valley, opening out her bosom, gave 571
 Fair prospect, intercepted less and less,
 O'er the flat meadows and indented coast
 Of the smooth lake, in compass seen :—far off,
 And yet conspicuous, stood the old Church-
 tower, 575

In majesty presiding over fields
 And habitations seemingly preserved
 From all intrusion of the restless world
 By rocks impassable and mountains huge.

Soft heath this elevated spot supplied, 580
 And choice of moss-clad stones, whereon we
 couched

Or sate reclined ; admiring quietly
 The general aspect of the scene ; but each
 Not seldom over anxious to make known
 His own discoveries ; or to favourite points 585
 Directing notice, merely from a wish
 To impart a joy, imperfect while unshared.

That rapturous moment never shall I forget
 When these particular interests were effaced
 From every mind !—Already had the sun, 590
 Sinking with less than ordinary state,

Attained his western bound ; but rays of light—
 Now suddenly diverging from the orb
 Retired behind the mountain tops or veiled
 By the dense air—shot upwards to the crown 595
 Of the blue firmament—aloft, and wide :

And multitudes of little floating clouds,
 Through their ethereal texture pierced—ere we,
 Who saw, of change were conscious—had be-
 come

Vivid as fire ; clouds separately poised,— 600
 Innumerable multitude of forms

Scattered through half the circle of the sky ;
 And giving back, and shedding each on each,
 With prodigal communion, the bright hues
 Which from the unapparent fount of glory 605
 They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
 That which the heavens displayed, the liquid
 deep
 Repeated ; but with unity sublime !

While from the grassy mountain's open side
 We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes intent
 On the refulgent spectacle, diffused 611
 Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space,
 The Priest in holy transport thus exclaimed :

“ Eternal Spirit ! universal God !
 Power inaccessible to human thought, 615
 Save by degrees and steps which thou hast
 deigned
 To furnish ; for this effluence of thyself,
 To the infirmity of mortal sense
 Vouchsafed ; this local transitory type
 Of thy paternal splendours, and the pomp 620
 Of those who fill thy courts in highest heaven,
 The radiant Cherubim ;—accept the thanks
 Which we, thy humble Creatures, here con-
 vened,
 Presume to offer ; we, who—from the breast
 Of the frail earth, permitted to behold 625
 The faint reflections only of thy face—
 Are yet exalted, and in soul adore !
 Such as they are who in thy presence stand
 Unsullied, incorruptible, and drink
 Imperishable majesty streamed forth 630
 From thy empyreal throne, the elect of earth
 Shall be—divested at the appointed hour
 Of all dishonour, cleansed from mortal stain.

—Accomplish, then, their number; and conclude

Time's weary course! Or if, by thy decree, 635
 The consummation that will come by stealth
 Be yet far distant, let thy Word prevail,
 Oh! let thy Word prevail, to take away
 The sting of human nature. Spread the law,
 As it is written in thy holy book, 640
 Throughout all lands: let every nation hear
 The high behest, and every heart obey;
 Both for the love of purity, and hope
 Which it affords, to such as do thy will
 And persevere in good, that they shall rise, 645
 To have a nearer view of thee, in heaven.

—Father of good! this prayer in bounty grant,
 In mercy grant it, to thy wretched sons.
 Then, nor till then, shall persecution cease,
 And cruel wars expire. The way is marked,
 The guide appointed, and the ransom paid. 651
 Alas! the nations, who of yore received
 These tidings, and in Christian temples meet
 The sacred truth to acknowledge, linger still;
 Preferring bonds and darkness to a state 655
 Of holy freedom, by redeeming love
 Proffered to all, while yet on earth detained.

“So fare the many; and the thoughtful few,
 Who in the anguish of their souls bewail
 This dire perverseness, cannot choose but ask,
 Shall it endure?—Shall enmity and strife, 661
 Falsehood and guile, be left to sow their seed;
 And the kind never perish? Is the hope
 Fallacious, or shall righteousness obtain
 A peaceable dominion, wide as earth, 665
 And ne'er to fail? Shall that blest day arrive
 When they, whose choice or lot it is to dwell
 In crowded cities, without fear shall live

Studious of mutual benefit ; and he,
Whom Morn awakens, among dew and flowers
Of every clime, to till the lonely field, 671
Be happy in himself ?—The law of faith
Working through love, such conquest shall it
gain,
Such triumph over sin and guilt achieve ?
Almighty Lord, thy further grace impart ! 675
And with that help the wonder shall be seen
Fulfilled, the hope accomplished ; and thy praise
Be sung with transport and unceasing joy.

“Once,” and with wild demeanour, as he
spake,
On us the venerable Pastor turned 680
His beaming eye that had been raised to Heaven,
“Once, while the Name, Jehovah, was a sound
Within the circuit of this sea-girt isle
Unheard, the savage nations bowed the head
To Gods delighting in remorseless deeds ; 685
Gods which themselves had fashioned, to promote
Ill purposes, and flatter foul desires.
Then, in the bosom of yon mountain-cove,
To those inventions of corrupted man 689
Mysterious rites were solemnised ; and there—
Amid impending rocks and gloomy woods—
Of those terrific Idols some received
Such dismal service, that the loudest voice
Of the swoln cataracts (which now are heard
Soft murmuring) was too weak to overcome, 695
Though aided by wild winds, the groans and
shrieks
Of human victims, offered up to appease
Or to propitiate. And, if living eyes
Had visionary faculties to see
The thing that hath been as the thing that is,

Aghast we might behold this crystal Mere 701
 Bedimmed with smoke, in wreaths voluminous,
 Flung from the body of devouring fires,
 To Taranis erected on the heights
 By priestly hands, for sacrifice performed 705
 Exultingly, in view of open day
 And full assemblage of a barbarous host;
 Or to Andates, female Power! who gave
 (For so they fancied) glorious victory. 709
 —A few rude monuments of mountain-stone
 Survive; all else is swept away.—How bright
 The appearances of things! From such, how
 changed
 The existing worship; and with those com-
 pared,
 The worshippers how innocent and blest!
 So wide the difference, a willing mind 715
 Might almost think, at this affecting hour,
 That paradise, the lost abode of man,
 Was raised again: and to a happy few,
 In its original beauty, here restored.

“ Whence but from thee, the true and only
 God, 720
 And from the faith derived through Him who
 bled
 Upon the cross, this marvellous advance
 Of good from evil; as if one extreme
 Were left, the other gained.—O ye, who come
 To kneel devoutly in yon reverend Pile, 725
 Called to such office by the peaceful sound
 Of sabbath bells; and ye, who sleep in earth,
 All cares forgotten, round its hallowed walls!
 For you, in presence of this little band
 Gathered together on the green hill-side, 730
 Your Pastor is emboldened to prefer
 Vocal thanksgivings to the eternal King;

Whose love, whose counsel, whose commands,
have made

Your very poorest rich in peace of thought 734
And in good works; and him, who is endowed
With scantiest knowledge, master of all truth
Which the salvation of his soul requires.

Conscious of that abundant favour showered
On you, the children of my humble care,
And this dear land, our country, while on earth
We sojourn, have I lifted up my soul, 741
Joy giving voice to fervent gratitude.

These barren rocks, your stern inheritance;
These fertile fields, that recompense your pains;
The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top; 745
Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,
Or hushed; the roaring waters, and the still—
They see the offering of my lifted hands,
They hear my lips present their sacrifice,
They know if I be silent, morn or even: 750
For, though in whispers speaking, the full heart
Will find a vent; and thought is praise to
him,

Audible praise, to thee, omniscient Mind,
From whom all gifts descend, all blessings
flow!"

This vesper-service closed, without delay, 755
From that exalted station to the plain
Descending, we pursued our homeward course,
In mute composure, o'er the shadowy lake,
Under a faded sky. No trace remained
Of those celestial splendours; grey the vault—
Pure, cloudless, ether; and the star of eve 761
Was wanting; but inferior lights appeared
Faintly, too faint almost for sight; and some
Above the darkened hills stood boldly forth
In twinkling lustre, ere the boat attained 765

Her mooring-place ; where, to the sheltering
tree,

Our youthful Voyagers bound fast her prow,
With prompt yet careful hands. This done,
we paced

The dewy fields ; but ere the Vicar's door 769

Was reached, the Solitary checked his steps ;

Then, intermingling thanks, on each bestowed
A farewell salutation ; and, the like

Receiving, took the slender path that leads

To the one cottage in the lonely dell : 774

But turned not without welcome promise made

That he would share the pleasures and pursuits

Of yet another summer's day, not loth

To wander with us through the fertile vales,

And o'er the mountain-wastes. " Another sun,"

Said he, " shall shine upon us, ere we part ; 780

Another sun, and peradventure more ;

If time, with free consent, be yours to give,

And season favours."

To enfeebled Power,

From this communion with uninjured Minds,

What renovation had been brought ; and what

Degree of healing to a wounded spirit, 786

Dejected, and habitually disposed

To seek, in degradation of the Kind,

Excuse and solace for her own defects ;

How far those erring notions were reformed ; 790

And whether aught, of tendency as good

And pure, from further intercourse ensued ;

This—if delightful hopes, as heretofore,

Inspire the serious song, and gentle Hearts

Cherish, and lofty Minds approve the past—

My future labours may not leave untold. 796

NOTES.

The Excursion (page 2).

Something must now be said of this poem, but chiefly, as has been done through the whole of these notes, with reference to my personal friends, and especially to her who has perseveringly taken them down from my dictation. Towards the close of the first book stand the lines that were first written, beginning, "Nine tedious years," and ending, "Last human tenant of these ruined walls." These were composed in '95 at Racedown; and for several passages describing the employment and demeanour of Margaret during her affliction, I was indebted to observations made in Dorsetshire, and afterwards at Alfoxden in Somersetshire, where I resided in '97 and '98. The lines towards the conclusion of the fourth book—beginning, "For, the man, who, in this spirit," to the words "intellectual soul"—were in order of time composed the next, either at Racedown or Alfoxden, I do not remember which. The rest of the poem was written in the vale of Grasmere, chiefly during our residence at Allan Bank. The long poem on my own education was, together with many minor poems, composed while we lived at the cottage at Town-end. Perhaps my purpose of giving an additional interest to these my poems in the eyes of my nearest and dearest friends may be promoted by saying a few words upon the character of the Wanderer, the Solitary, and the Pastor, and some other of the persons introduced. And first, of the principal one, the Wanderer. My lamented friend Southey (for this is written a month after his decease) used to say that had he been born a papist, the course of life which would in all probability have been his was the one for which he was most fitted and most to his mind,—that of a Benedictine monk in a convent, furnished, as many once were and some still are, with an inexhaustible library. *Books*, as appears from

many passages in his writings, and as was evident to those who had opportunities of observing his daily life, were in fact his *passion*; and *wandering*, I can with truth affirm, was *mine*; but this propensity in me was happily counteracted by inability from want of fortune to fulfil my wishes. But, had I been born in a class which would have deprived me of what is called a liberal education, it is not unlikely that, being strong in body, I should have taken to a way of life such as that in which my Pedlar passed the greater part of his days. At all events, I am here called upon freely to acknowledge that the character I have represented in his person is chiefly an idea of what I fancied my own character might have become in his circumstances. Nevertheless, much of what he says and does had an external existence that fell under my own youthful and subsequent observation. An individual named Patrick, by birth and education a Scotchman, followed this humble occupation for many years, and afterwards settled in the town of Kendal. He married a kinswoman of my wife's, and her sister Sarah was brought up from her ninth year under this good man's roof. My own imagination, I was happy to find clothed in reality, and fresh ones suggested, by what she reported of this man's tenderness of heart, his strong and pure imagination, and his solid attainments in literature, chiefly religious whether in prose or verse. At Hawkshead also, while I was a schoolboy, there occasionally resided a Packman (the name then generally given to persons of this calling) with whom I had frequent conversations upon what had befallen him, and what he had observed, during his wandering life; and, as was natural, we took much to each other: and, upon the subject of *Pedlarism* in general, as *then* followed, and its favourableness to an intimate knowledge of human concerns, not merely among the humbler classes of society, I need say nothing here in addition to what is to be found in the "Excursion," and a note attached to it. Now for the Solitary. Of him I have much less to say. Not long after we took up our abode at Grasmere, came to reside there, from what motive I either never knew or have forgotten, a Scotchman a little past the middle of life, who had for many years been chaplain to a Highland regiment. He was in no respect as far as I know, an interesting character, though in his appearance there was a good deal that attracted attention, as if he had been shattered in fortune and not happy in mind. Of his quondam position I availed myself, to

connect with the Wanderer, also a Scotchman, a character suitable to my purpose, the elements of which I drew from several persons with whom I had been connected, and who fell under my observation during frequent residences in London at the beginning of the French Revolution. The chief of these was, one may *now* say, a Mr. Fawcett, a preacher at a dissenting meeting-house at the Old Jewry. It happened to me several times to be one of his congregation through my connection with Mr. Nicholson of Cateaton Street, who at that time, when I had not many acquaintances in London, used often to invite me to dine with him on Sundays; and I took that opportunity (Mr. N. being a dissenter) of going to hear Fawcett, who was an able and eloquent man. He published a poem on war, which had a good deal of merit, and made me think more about him than I should otherwise have done. But his Christianity was probably never very deeply rooted; and, like many others in those times of like showy talents, he had not strength of character to withstand the effects of the French Revolution, and of the wild and lax opinions which had done so much towards producing it, and far more in carrying it forward in its extremes. Poor Fawcett, I have been told, became pretty much such a person as I have described; and early disappeared from the stage, having fallen into habits of intemperance, which I have heard (though I will not answer for the fact) hastened his death. Of him I need say no more: there were many like him at that time, which the world will never be without, but which were more numerous then for reasons too obvious to be dwelt upon.

To what is said of the Pastor in the poem I have little to add, but what may be deemed superfluous. It has ever appeared to me highly favourable to the beneficial influence of the Church of England upon all gradations and classes of society, that the patronage of its benefices is in numerous instances attached to the estates of noble families of ancient gentry; and accordingly I am gratified by the opportunity afforded me in the "Excursion," to portray the character of a country clergyman of more than ordinary talents, born and bred in the upper ranks of society so as to partake of their refinements, and at the same time brought by his pastoral office and his love of rural life into intimate connection with the peasantry of his native district. To illustrate the relation which in my mind this Pastor bore to the Wanderer, and the resemblance between them, or rather the points of community

in their nature, I likened one to an oak and the other to a sycamore ; and, having here referred to this comparison, I need only add, I had no one individual in my mind, wishing rather to embody this idea than to break in upon the simplicity of it, by traits of individual character or of any peculiarity of opinion.

And now for a few words upon the scene where these interviews and conversations are supposed to occur. The scene of the first book of the poem is, I must own, laid in a tract of country not sufficiently near to that which soon comes into view in the second book, to agree with the fact. All that relates to Margaret and the ruined cottage, etc., was taken from observations made in the south-west of England, and certainly it would require more than seven-league boots to stretch in one morning from a common in Somersetshire or Dorsetshire to the heights of Furness Fells and the deep valleys they embosom. For thus dealing with space I need make, I trust, no apology, but my friends may be amused by the truth. In the poem, I suppose that the Pedlar and I ascended from a plain country up the vale of Langdale, and struck off a good way above the chapel to the western side of the vale. We ascended the hill and thence looked down upon the circular recess in which lies Blea-Tarn, chosen by the Solitary for his retreat. After we quit his cottage, passing over a low ridge we descend into another vale, that of Little Langdale, towards the head of which stands, embowered or partly shaded by yews and other trees, something between a cottage and a mansion or gentleman's house such as they once were in this country. This I convert into the Parsonage, and at the same time, and as by the waving of a magic wand, I turn the comparatively confined vale of Langdale, its Tarn, and the rude chapel which once adorned the valley, into the stately and comparatively spacious vale of Grasmere, its Lake, and its ancient Parish Church ; and upon the side of Loughrigg Fell, at the foot of the Lake, and looking down upon it and the whole vale and its encompassing mountains, the Pastor is supposed by me to stand, when at sunset he addresses his companions in words which I hope my readers will remember, or I should not have taken the trouble of giving so much in detail the materials on which my mind actually worked. Now for a few particulars of *fact* respecting the persons whose stories are told or characters are described by the different speakers. To Margaret I have already alluded. I will add here, that the lines beginning, " She was a

woman of a steady mind," faithfully delineate, as far as they go, the character possessed in common by many women whom it has been my happiness to know in humble life; and that several of the most touching things which she is represented as saying and doing are taken from actual observation of the distresses and trials under which different persons were suffering, some of them strangers to me, and others daily under my notice. I was born too late to have a distinct remembrance of the origin of the American war, but the state in which I represent Robert's mind to be I had frequent opportunities of observing at the commencement of our rupture with France in '93, opportunities of which I availed myself in the story of the Female Vagrant as told in the poem on "Guilt and Sorrow." The account given by the Solitary towards the close of the second book, in all that belongs to the character of the Old Man, was taken from a Grasmere pauper, who was boarded in the last house quitting the vale on the road to Ambleside: the character of his hostess, and all that befell the poor man upon the mountain, belong to Patterdale: the woman I knew well; her name was — J —, and she was exactly such a person as I describe. The ruins of the old chapel, among which the man was found lying, may yet be traced, and stood upon the ridge that divides Patterdale from Boardale and Martindale, having been placed there for the convenience of both districts. The glorious appearance disclosed above and among the mountains was described partly from what my friend Mr. Luff, who then lived in Patterdale, witnessed upon that melancholy occasion, and partly from what Mrs. Wordsworth and I had seen in company with Sir George and Lady Beaumont above Hartshope Hall on our way from Patterdale to Ambleside.

And now for a few words upon the Church, its Monuments, and the Deceased who are spoken of as lying in the surrounding churchyard. But first for the one picture, given by the Pastor and the Wanderer, of the Living. In this nothing is introduced but what was taken from nature and real life. The cottage is called Hacket, and stands as described on the southern extremity of the ridge which separates the two Langdales: the pair who inhabited it were called Jonathan and Betty Yewdale. Once when our children were ill, of whooping-cough I think, we took them for change of air to this cottage, and were in the habit of going there to drink tea upon fine summer afternoons, so that we became intimately acquainted with the

characters, habits, and lives of these good, and, let me say, in the main, wise people. The matron had, in her early youth, been a servant in a house at Hawkshead, where several boys boarded, while I was a schoolboy there. I did not remember her as having served in that capacity; but we had many little anecdotes to tell to each other of remarkable boys, incidents and adventures which had made a noise in their day in that small town. These two persons afterwards settled at Rydal, where they both died.

The church, as already noticed, is that of Grasmere. The interior of it has been improved lately—made warmer by under-drawing the roof and raising the floor—but the rude and antique majesty of its former appearance has been impaired by painting the rafters; and the oak benches, with a simple rail at the back dividing them from each other, have given way to seats that have more the appearance of pews. It is remarkable that, excepting only the pew belonging to Rydal Hall, that to Rydal Mount, the one to the Parsonage, and I believe another, the men and women still continue, as used to be the custom in Wales, to sit separate from each other. Is this practice as old as the Reformation? and when and how did it originate? In the Jewish synagogues and in Lady Huntingdon's chapels the sexes are divided in the same way. In the adjoining churchyard greater changes have taken place. It is now not a little crowded with tombstones; and near the school-house which stands in the churchyard is an ugly structure, built to receive the hearse, which is recently come into use. It would not be worth while to allude to this building or the hearse-vehicle it contains, but that the latter has been the means of introducing a change much to be lamented in the mode of conducting funerals among the mountains. Now, the coffin is lodged in the hearse at the door of the house of the deceased, and the corpse is so conveyed to the churchyard gate: all the solemnity which formerly attended its progress, as described in the poem, is put an end to. So much do I regret this, that I beg to be excused for giving utterance here to a wish that, should it befall me to die at Rydal Mount, my own body may be carried to Grasmere church after the manner in which, till lately, that of every one was borne to that place of sepulture, namely, on the shoulders of neighbours, no house being passed without some words of a funeral psalm being sung at the time by the attendants. When I put into the mouth of the Wanderer, "Many precious rites and customs of our rural ancestry are gone or steal-

ing from us ; this I hope will last for ever," and what follows, little did I foresee that the observance and mode of proceeding, which had often affected me so much, would so soon be superseded. Having said much of the injury done to this churchyard, let me add that one is at liberty to look forward to a time when, by the growth of the yew-trees, thriving there, a solemnity will be spread over the place that will in some degree make amends for the old simple character which has already been so much encroached upon, and will be still more every year. I will here set down, more at length, what has been mentioned in a previous note, that my friend Sir George Beaumont, having long ago purchased the beautiful piece of water called Loughrigg Tarn, on the banks of which he intended to build, I told him that a person in Kendal who was attached to the place wished to purchase it. Sir George, finding the possession of no use to him, consented to part with it, and placed the purchase-money—twenty pounds—at my disposal for any local use which I thought proper. Accordingly I resolved to plant yew-trees in the churchyard, and had four pretty strong large oak enclosures made, in each of which was planted, under my own eye, and principally if not entirely by my own hand, two young trees, with the intention of leaving the one that throve best to stand. Many years after, Mr. Barber, who will long be remembered in Grasmere ; Mr. Greenwood, the chief landed proprietor ; and myself, had four other enclosures made in the churchyard at our own expense, in each of which was planted a tree taken from its neighbour, and they all stand thriving admirably, the fences having been removed as no longer necessary. May the trees be taken care of hereafter when we are all gone, and some of them will perhaps at some far distant time rival in majesty the yew of Lorton and those which I have described as growing in Borrowdale, where they are still to be seen in grand assemblage.

And now for the persons that are selected as lying in the churchyard. But first for the individual whose grave is prepared to receive him. His story is here truly related : he was a school-fellow of mine for some years. He came to us when he was at least seventeen years of age, very tall, robust, and full-grown. This prevented him from falling into the amusements and games of the school : consequently he gave more time to books. He was not remarkably bright or quick, but by industry he made a progress more than respectable. His parents not

being wealthy enough to send him to college, when he left Hawkshead he became a schoolmaster, with a view to prepare himself for holy orders. About this time he fell in love as related in the poem, and everything followed as there described, except that I do not know when and where he died. The number of youths that came to Hawkshead school, from the families of the humble yeomanry, to be educated to a certain degree of scholarship as a preparation for the church, was considerable, and the fortunes of these persons in after life various of course, and of some not a little remarkable. I have now one of this class in my eye who became an usher in a preparatory school and ended in making a large fortune. His manners when he came to Hawkshead were as uncouth as well could be; but he had good abilities, with skill to turn them to account; and when the master of the school, to which he was usher, died, he stepped into his place and became proprietor of the establishment. He contrived to manage it with such address, and so much to the taste of what is called high society and the fashionable world, that no school of the kind, even till he retired, was in such high request. Ministers of state, the wealthiest gentry, and nobility of the first rank, vied with each other in bespeaking a place for their sons in the seminary of this fortunate teacher. In the solitude of Grasmere, while living as a married man in a cottage of eight pounds per annum rent, I often used to smile at the tales which reached me of his brilliant career. Not two hundred yards from the cottage in Grasmere, just mentioned, to which I retired, this gentleman, who many years afterwards purchased a small estate in the neighbourhood, is now erecting a boat-house, with an upper story, to be resorted to as an entertaining-room when he and his associates may feel inclined to take their pastime on the lake. Every passenger will be disgusted with the sight of this edifice, not merely as a tasteless thing in itself, but as utterly out of place, and peculiarly fitted, as far as it is observed (and it obtrudes itself on notice at every point of view), to mar the beauty and destroy the pastoral simplicity of the vale. For my own part and that of my household it is our utter detestation, standing by a shore to which, before the highroad was made to pass that way, we used daily and hourly to repair for seclusion and for the shelter of a grove under which I composed many of my poems, the "Brothers" especially, and for this reason we gave the grove that name.

“That which each man loved
And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
Dies with him, or is changed.”

So much for my old school-fellow and his exploits. I will only add that the foundation has twice failed, from the lake no doubt being intolerant of the intrusion.

The Miner, next described as having found his treasure after twice ten years of labour, lived in Patterdale, and the story is true to the letter. It seems to me, however, rather remarkable that the strength of mind which had supported him through this long unrewarded labour did not enable him to bear its successful issue. Several times in the course of my life I have heard of sudden influxes of great wealth being followed by derangement, and in one instance the shock of good fortune was so great as to produce absolute idiocy: but these all happened where there had been little or no previous effort to acquire the riches, and therefore such a consequence might the more naturally be expected than in the case of the solitary Miner. In reviewing his story, one cannot but regret that such perseverance was not sustained by a worthier object. Archimedes leapt out of his bath and ran about the streets proclaiming his discovery in a transport of joy, but we are not told that he lost either his life or his senses in consequence. The next character, to whom the Priest is led by contrast with the resoluteness displayed by the foregoing, is taken from a person born and bred in Grasmere, by name Dawson; and whose talents, disposition, and way of life were such as are here delineated. I did not know him, but all was fresh in memory when we settled at Grasmere in the beginning of the century. From this point, the conversation leads to the mention of two individuals who, by their several fortunes, were, at different times, driven to take refuge at the small and obscure town of Hawkshead on the skirt of these mountains. Their stories I had from the dear old dame with whom, as a schoolboy and afterwards, I lodged for nearly the space of ten years. The elder, the Jacobite, was named Drummond, and was of a high family in Scotland: the Hanoverian Whig bore the name of Vandeput, and might perhaps be a descendant of some Dutchman who had come over in the train of King William. At all events his zeal was such that he ruined himself by a contest for the representation of London or Westminster, undertaken to support his party; and retired to this

corner of the world, selected, as it had been by Drummond, for that obscurity which, since visiting the Lakes became fashionable, it has no longer retained. So much was this region considered out of the way till a late period, that persons who had fled from justice used often to resort hither for concealment; and some were so bold as to, not unfrequently, make excursions from the place of their retreat, for the purpose of committing fresh offences. Such was particularly the case with two brothers of the name of Weston who took up their abode at Old Brathay, I think about seventy years ago. They were highwaymen, and lived there some time without being discovered, though it was known that they often disappeared in a way and upon errands which could not be accounted for. Their horses were noticed as being of a choice breed, and I have heard from the Relph family, one of whom was a saddler in the town of Kendal, that they were curious in their saddles and housings and accoutrements of their horses. They, as I have heard, and as was universally believed, were in the end both taken and hanged.

“ Tall was her stature; her complexion dark
And saturnine.”

This person lived at Town-end, and was almost our next neighbour. I have little to notice concerning her beyond what is said in the poem. She was a most striking instance how far a woman may surpass in talent, in knowledge, and culture of mind, those with and among whom she lives, and yet fall below them in Christian virtues of the heart and spirit. It seemed almost, and I say it with grief, that in proportion as she excelled in the one, she failed in the other. How frequently has one to observe in both sexes the same thing, and how mortifying is the reflection!

“ As, on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March.”

The story that follows was told to Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister by the sister of this unhappy young woman; and every particular was exactly as I have related. The party was not known to me, though she lived at Hawkshead, but it was after I left school. The clergyman, who administered comfort to her in her distress, I knew well. Her sister who told the story was the wife of a leading yeoman in the vale of Grasmere, and they were an affectionate pair and greatly respected by every one who knew

them. Neither lived to be old; and their estate—which was perhaps the most considerable then in the vale, and was endeared to them by many remembrances of a salutary character not easily understood, or sympathised with, by those who are born to great affluence—passed to their eldest son, according to the practice of these vales, who died soon after he came into possession. He was an amiable and promising youth, but was succeeded by an only brother, a good-natured man, who fell into habits of drinking, by which he gradually reduced his property; and the other day the last acre of it was sold, and his wife and children and he himself, still surviving, have very little left to live upon, which it would not perhaps have been worth while to record here but that, through all trials, this woman has proved a model of patience, meekness, affectionate forbearance, and forgiveness. Their eldest son, who, through the vices of his father, has thus been robbed of an ancient family inheritance, was never heard to murmur or complain against the cause of their distress, and is now (1843) deservedly the chief prop of his mother's hopes.

The clergyman and his family described at the beginning of the seventh book were, during many years, our principal associates in the vale of Grasmere, unless I were to except our very nearest neighbours. I have entered so particularly into the main points of their history, that I will barely testify in prose that—with the single exception of the particulars of their journey to Grasmere, which, however, was exactly copied from in another instance—the whole that I have said of them is as faithful to the truth as words can make it. There was much talent in the family: the eldest son was distinguished for poetical talent, of which a specimen is given in my notes to the sonnets to the Duddon. Once, when in our cottage at Town-end I was talking with him about poetry, in the course of conversation I presumed to find fault with the versification of Pope, of whom he was an enthusiastic admirer: he defended him with a warmth that indicated much irritation: nevertheless I would not abandon my point, and said, "In compass and variety of sound your own versification surpasses his." Never shall I forget the change in his countenance and tone of voice: the storm was laid in a moment; he no longer disputed my judgment, and I passed immediately in his mind, no doubt, for as great a critic as ever lived. I ought to add, he was a clergyman and a well-educated man, and his verbal

memory was the most remarkable of any individual I have known, except a Mr. Archer, an Irishman, who lived several years in this neighbourhood, and who, in this faculty, was a prodigy; he afterwards became deranged, and I fear continues so, if alive. Then follows the character of Robert Walker, for which see notes to the Duddon. Then that of the deaf man, whose epitaph may be seen in the churchyard at the head of Haweswater, and whose qualities of mind and heart, and their benign influence in conjunction with his privation, I had from his relatives on the spot. The blind man, next commemorated, was John Gough, of Kendal, a man known, far beyond his neighbourhood, for his talents and attainments in natural history and science. Of the Infant's grave, next noticed, I will only say, it is an exact picture of what fell under my own observation; and all persons who are intimately acquainted with cottage life must often have observed like instances of the working of the domestic affections.

“A volley thrice repeated o’er the corse
Let down into the hollow of that grave.”

This young volunteer bore the name of Dawson, and was younger brother, if I am not mistaken, to the prodigal of whose character and fortunes an account is given towards the beginning of the preceding book. The father of the family I knew well; he was a man of literary education and of experience in society much beyond what was common among the inhabitants of the vale. He had lived a good while in the Highlands of Scotland, as a manager of iron-works at Bunaw, and had acted as clerk to one of my predecessors in the office of Distributor of Stamps, when he used to travel round the country collecting and bringing home the money due to Government, in gold, which, it may be worth while to mention for the sake of my friends, was deposited in the cell or iron closet under the west window of the long room at Rydal Mount, which still exists with the iron doors that guarded the property. This of course was before the time of Bills and Notes. The two sons of this person had no doubt been led by the knowledge of their father to take more delight in scholarship, and had been accustomed in their own minds to take a wider view of social interests than was usual among their associates. The premature death of this gallant young man was much lamented, and, as an attendant at the funeral, I myself witnessed the ceremony and the effect of it as described in the poem.

“ Tradition tells
That, in Eliza's golden days, a Knight
Came on a war-horse.”

“ The house is gone.”

The pillars of the gateway in front of the mansion remained when we first took up our abode at Grasmere. Two or three cottages still remain, which are called Knott-houses from the name of the gentleman (I have called him a knight) concerning whom these traditions survive. He was the ancestor of the Knott family, formerly considerable proprietors in the district. What follows in the discourse of the Wanderer upon the changes he had witnessed in rural life, by the introduction of machinery, is truly described from what I myself saw during my boyhood and early youth, and from what was often told me by persons of this humble calling. Happily, most happily, for these mountains, the mischief was diverted from the banks of their beautiful streams, and transferred to open and flat countries abounding in coal, where the agency of steam was found much more effectual for carrying on those demoralising works. Had it not been for this invention, long before the present time every torrent and river in this district would have had its factory, large and populous in proportion to the power of the water that could there have been commanded. Parliament has interfered to prevent the night-work which was once carried on in these mills as actively as during the daytime, and by necessity still more perniciously—a sad disgrace to the proprietors, and to the nation which could so long tolerate such unnatural proceedings. Reviewing at this late period, 1843, what I put into the mouths of my interlocutors a few years after the commencement of the century, I grieve that so little progress has been made in diminishing the evils deplored, or promoting the benefits of education which the Wanderer anticipates. The results of Lord Ashley's labours to defer the time when children might legally be allowed to work in factories, and his endeavours to limit still farther the hours of permitted labour, have fallen far short of his own humane wishes, and those of every benevolent and right-minded man who has carefully attended to this subject: and in the present session of Parliament (1843) Sir James Graham's attempt to establish a course of religious education among the children employed in factories has been abandoned, in consequence of what might easily have been foreseen, the vehement and

turbulent opposition of the Dissenters: so that, for many years to come, it may be thought expedient to leave the religious instruction of children entirely in the hands of the several denominations of Christians in the island, each body to work according to its own means and in its own way. Such is my own confidence, a confidence I share with many others of my most valued friends, in the superior advantages, both religious and social, which attend a course of instruction presided over and guided by the clergy of the Church of England, that I have no doubt that, if but once its members, lay and clerical, were duly sensible of those benefits, their church would daily gain ground, and rapidly, upon every shape and fashion of Dissent: and in that case, a great majority in Parliament being sensible of these benefits, the Ministers of the country might be emboldened, were it necessary, to apply funds of the State to the support of education on Church principles. Before I conclude, I cannot forbear noticing the strenuous efforts made at this time in Parliament, by so many persons, to extend manufacturing and commercial industry at the expense of agricultural, though we have recently had abundant proofs that the apprehensions expressed by the Wanderer were not groundless.

“I spake of mischief by the wise diffused
With gladness, thinking that the more it spreads
The healthier, the securer, we become—
Delusion which a moment may destroy!”

The Chartists are well aware of this possibility, and cling to it with an ardour and perseverance which nothing but wiser and more brotherly dealing towards the many, on the part of the wealthy few, can moderate or remove.

“While, from the grassy mountain’s open side,
We gazed, in silence hushed.”

The point here fixed upon in my imagination is half-way up the northern side of Loughrigg Fell, from which the Pastor and his companions were supposed to look upwards to the sky and mountain-tops, and round the vale, with the lake lying immediately beneath them.

“But turned not without welcome promise made,
That he would share the pleasures and pursuits
Of yet another summer’s day, consumed
In wandering with us.”

When I reported this promise of the Solitary, and long after, it was my wish, and I might say intention, that we should resume our wanderings, and pass the Borders into his native country, where, as I hoped, he might witness, in the society of the Wanderer, some religious ceremony—a sacrament, say, in the open fields, or a preaching among the mountains—which, by recalling to his mind the days of his early childhood, when he had been present on such occasions in company with his parents and nearest kindred, might have dissolved his heart into tenderness, and so have done more towards restoring the Christian faith in which he had been educated, and, with that, contentedness and even cheerfulness of mind, than all that the Wanderer and Pastor, by their several effusions and addresses, had been able to effect. An issue like this was in my intentions. But, alas!

“’Mid the wreck of IS and WAS,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o’er thought’s optic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.”—I. F.

Preface to the Excursion.

“*Descend, prophetic Spirit that inspirest
The human soul,*” etc. (page 3).

“Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic Soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come.”

SHAKESPEARE’S *Sonnets*.—W.W.

“—— *much did he see of Men*” (page 21).

At the risk of giving a shock to the prejudices of artificial society, I have ever been ready to pay homage to the aristocracy of nature; under a conviction that vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste. It may still, however, be satisfactory to have prose testimony how far a Character, employed for purposes of imagination, is founded upon general fact. I, therefore, subjoin an extract from an author who had opportunities of being well acquainted with a class of men, from whom my own personal knowledge emboldened me to draw this portrait.

“We learn from Cæsar and other Roman Writers, that the travelling merchants who frequented Gaul and other barbarous countries, either newly conquered by the Roman

arms, or bordering on the Roman conquests, were ever the first to make the inhabitants of those countries familiarly acquainted with the Roman modes of life, and to inspire them with an inclination to follow the Roman fashions, and to enjoy Roman conveniences. In North America, travelling merchants from the Settlements have done and continue to do much more towards civilizing the Indian natives, than all the missionaries, papist or protestant who have ever been sent among them.

“It is farther to be observed, for the credit of this most useful class of men, that they commonly contribute, by their personal manners, no less than by the sale of their wares, to the refinement of the people among whom they travel. Their dealings form them to great quickness of wit and acuteness of judgment. Having constant occasion to recommend themselves and their goods, they acquire habits of the most obliging attention, and the most insinuating address. As in their peregrinations they have opportunity of contemplating the manners of various men and various cities, they become eminently skilled in the knowledge of the world. *As they wander, each alone, through thinly-inhabited districts, they form habits of reflection and of sublime contemplation.* With all these qualifications, no wonder, that they should often be, in remote parts of the country, the best mirrors of fashion, and censors of manners; and should contribute much to polish the roughness, and soften the rusticity of our peasantry. It is not more than twenty or thirty years since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England, of purpose to *carry the pack*, was considered as going to lead the life and acquire the fortune of a gentleman. When, after twenty years’ absence, in that honourable line of employment, he returned with his acquisitions to his native country, he was regarded as a gentleman to all intents and purposes.”—HERON’S *Journey in Scotland*, vol. i. p. 89.—W. W.

“*Lost in unsearchable Eternity!*” (page 78).

Since this paragraph was composed, I have read with so much pleasure, in Burnet’s “Theory of the Earth,” a passage expressing corresponding sentiments, excited by objects of a similar nature, that I cannot forbear to transcribe it.

“Siquid verò Natura nobis dedit spectaculum, in hâc

tellure, verè gratum, et philosopho dignum, id semel mihi contigisse arbitror ; cùm ex celsissimâ rupe specularundus ad oram maris Mediterranei, hinc æquor cæruleum, illinc tractus Alpinos prospexi ; nihil quidem magis dispar aut dissimile, nec in suo genere, magis egregium et singulare. Hoc theatrum ego facilè prætulerim Romanis cunctis, Græcisve ; atque id quod natura hîc spectandum exhibet, scenicis ludis omnibus, aut amphitheatri certaminibus. Nihil hîc elegans aut venustum, sed ingens et magnificum, et quod placet magnitudine suâ et quâdam specie immensitatis. Hinc intuebar maris æquabilem superficiem, usque et usque diffusam, quantum maximùm oculorum acies ferri potuit ; illinc disruptissimam terræ faciem, et vastas moles variè elevatas aut depressas, erectas, propendentes, reclinatas, coacervatas, omni situ inæquali et turbido. Placuit, ex hâc parte, Naturæ unitas et simplicitas, et inexhausta quædam planities ; ex alterâ, multiformis confusio magnorum corporum, et insanæ rerum strages : quas cùm intuebar, non urbis alicujus aut oppidi, sed contracti mundi rudera, ante oculos habere mihi visus sum.

“ In singulis ferè montibus erat aliquid insolens et mirabile, sed præ cæteris mihi placebat illa, quâ sedebam, rupes ; erat maxima et altissima, et quâ terram respiciebat, molliori ascensu altitudinem suam dissimulabat : quâ verò mare, horrèdum præceps, et quasi ad perpendicularum facta, instar parietis. Prætereâ facies illa marina adeò erat lævis ac uniformis (quod in rupibus aliquando observare licet) ac si scissa fuisset à summo ad imum, in illo plano ; vel terræ motu aliquo, aut fulmine, divulsa.

“ Ima pars rupis erat cava, recessusque habuit, et saxeos specus, euntes in vacuum montem ; sive naturâ pridem factos, sive exesos mari, et undarum crebris ictibus : In hos enim cum impetu ruebant et fragore, æstuantis maris fluctus ; quos iterum spumantes reddidit antrum, et quas i ab imo ventre evomuit.

“ Dextrum latus montis erat præruptum, aspero saxo et nudâ caute ; sinistrum non adeò neglexerat Natura, arboribus utpote ornatum : et prope pedem montis rivus limpidæ aquæ prorupit ; qui cùm vicinam vallem irrigaverat, lento motu serpens, et per varios mæandros, quasi ad protrahendam vitam, in magno mari absorptus subito periit. Denique in summo vertice promontorii, commodè eminebat saxum, cui insidebam contemplabundus. Vale augusta sedes, Rege digna : Augusta rupes, semper mihi memoranda !”—P. 89. *Telluris Theoria sacra, etc. Editio secunda.*—W. W.

"Of Mississippi, or that northern stream" (page 103).

"A man is supposed to improve by going out into the *World*, by visiting *London*. Artificial man does; he extends with his sphere; but, alas! that sphere is microscopic; it is formed of minutæ, and he surrenders his genuine vision to the artist, in order to embrace it in his ken. His bodily senses grow acute, even to barren and inhuman pruriency; while his mental become proportionally obtuse. The reverse is the Man of Mind: he who is placed in the sphere of Nature and of God, might be a mock at Tattersall's and Brooks's, and a sneer at St. James's: he would certainly be swallowed alive by the first *Pizarro* that crossed him:—But when he walks along the river of Amazons; when he rests his eye on the unrivalled Andes; when he measures the long and watered savannah; or contemplates, from a sudden promontory, the distant, vast Pacific—and feels himself a freeman in this vast theatre, and commanding each ready produced fruit of this wilderness, and each progeny of this stream—his exaltation is not less than imperial. He is as gentle, too, as he is great: his emotions of tenderness keep pace with his elevation of sentiment; for he says, 'These were made by a good Being, who, unsought by me, placed me here to enjoy them.' He becomes at once a child and a king. His mind is in himself; from hence he argues, and from hence he acts, and he argues unerringly, and acts magisterially; his mind in himself is also in his God; and therefore he loves, and therefore he soars."—From the notes upon "*The Hurricane*," a Poem, by William Gilbert.

The Reader, I am sure, will thank me for the above quotation, which, though from a strange book is one of the finest passages of modern English prose.—W. W.

*"'Tis, by comparison, an easy task
Earth to despise," etc. (page 113).*

See, upon this subject, Baxter's most interesting review of his own opinions and sentiments in the decline of life. It may be found (lately reprinted) in Dr. Wordsworth's "*Ecclesiastical Biography*."—W. W.

*"Alas! the endowment of immortal power,
Is matched unequally with custom, time," etc. (page 115).*

This subject is treated at length in the Ode—"Intimations of Immortality," vol. v. page 163.—W. W.

“ *Knowing the heart of Man is set to be,*” etc. (page 118).

The passage quoted from Daniel is taken from a poem addressed to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and the two last lines, printed in Italics, are by him translated from Seneca. The whole poem is very beautiful. I will transcribe four stanzas from it, as they contain an admirable picture of the state of a wise Man’s mind in a time of public commotion.

“ Nor is he moved with all the thunder-cracks
Of tyrant’s threats, or with the surly brow
Of Power, that proudly sits on others’ crimes ;
Charged with more crying sins than those he checks.
The storms of sad confusion that may grow
Up in the present for the coming times,
Appal not him ; that hath no side at all,
But of himself, and knows the worst can fall.

“ Although his heart (so near allied to earth)
Cannot but pity the perplexed state
Of troublous and distressed mortality,
That thus make way unto the ugly birth
Of their own sorrows, and do still beget
Affliction upon Imbecility :
Yet seeing thus the course of things must run,
He looks thereon not strange, but as fore-done.

“ And whilst distraught ambition compasses,
And is encompassed, while as craft deceives,
And is deceived : whilst man doth ransack man,
And builds on blood, and rises by distress ;
And th’ Inheritance of desolation leaves
To great-expecting hopes : He looks thereon,
As from the shore of peace, with unwet eye,
And bears no venture in Impiety.

“ Thus, Lady, fares that man that hath prepared
A rest for his desires ; and sees all things
Beneath him ; and hath learned this book of man,
Full of the notes of frailty ; and compared
The best of glory with her sufferings :
By whom, I see, you labour all you can
To plant your heart ! and set your thoughts as near
His glorious mansion as your powers can bear.”

—W. W.

*"Or rather, as we stand on holy earth
And have the dead around us" (page 172).*

*"Leo. You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?"*

*Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might;
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world."*

See The Brothers.—W. W.

*"And suffering Nature grieved that one should die"
(page 183).*

SOUTHEY'S Retrospect.—W. W.

*"And whence that tribute? wherefore these regards?"
(page 183).*

The sentiments and opinions here uttered are in unison with those expressed in the following Essay upon Epitaphs, which was furnished by me for Mr. Coleridge's periodical work, "The Friend;" and as they are dictated by a spirit congenial to that which pervades this and the two succeeding books, the sympathising reader will not be displeased to see the Essay here annexed.—W. W.

ESSAY UPON EPITAPHS.

It need scarcely be said, that an Epitaph presupposes a Monument, upon which it is to be engraven. Almost all Nations have wished that certain external signs should point out the places where their dead are interred. Among savage tribes unacquainted with letters this has mostly been done either by rude stones placed near the graves, or by mounds of earth raised over them. This custom proceeded obviously from a twofold desire; first, to guard the remains of the deceased from irreverent approach or from savage violation: and, secondly, to preserve their memory. "Never any," says Camden, "neglected burial but some savage nations, as the Bactrians, which cast their dead to the dogs; some varlet philosophers, as Diogenes, who desired to be devoured of fishes

some dissolute courtiers, as Mæcenas, who was wont to say, 'Non tumultum curo; sepelit natura relictos.'

"I'm careless of a grave:—Nature her dead will save."

As soon as nations had learned the use of letters, epitaphs were inscribed upon these monuments; in order that their intention might be more surely and adequately fulfilled. I have derived monuments and epitaphs from two sources of feeling: but these do in fact resolve themselves into one. The invention of epitaphs, Weever, in his "Discourse of Funeral Monuments," says rightly, "proceeded from the presage or fore-feeling of immortality, implanted in all men naturally, and is referred to the scholars of Linus the Theban poet, who flourished about the year of the world two thousand seven hundred; who first bewailed this Linus their Master, when he was slain, in doleful verses, then called of him *Ælina*, afterwards *Epitaphia*, for that they were first sung at burials, after engraved upon the sepulchres."

And, verily, without the consciousness of a principle of immortality in the human soul, Man could never have had awakened in him the desire to live in the remembrance of his fellows: mere love, or the yearning of kind towards kind, could not have produced it. The dog or horse perishes in the field, or in the stall, by the side of his companions, and is incapable of anticipating the sorrow with which his surrounding associates shall bemoan his death, or pine for his loss; he cannot pre-conceive this regret, he can form no thought of it; and therefore cannot possibly have a desire to leave such regret or remembrance behind him. Add to the principle of love which exists in the inferior animals, the faculty of reason which exists in Man alone; will the conjunction of these account for the desire? Doubtless it is a necessary consequence of this conjunction; yet not I think as a direct result, but only to be come at through an intermediate thought, viz. that of an intimation or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable. At least the precedence, in order of birth, of one feeling to the other, is unquestionable. If we look back upon the days of childhood, we shall find that the time is not in remembrance when, with respect to our own individual Being, the mind was without this assurance; whereas, the wish to be remembered by our friends or kindred after death, or even in absence, is, as we shall discover, a sensation that does not form itself till the

social feelings have been developed, and the Reason has connected itself with a wide range of objects. Forlorn, and cut off from communication with the best part of his nature, must that man be, who should derive the sense of immortality, as it exists in the mind of a child, from the same unthinking gaiety or liveliness of animal spirits with which the lamb in the meadow, or any other irrational creature is endowed; who should ascribe it, in short, to blank ignorance in the child; to an inability arising from the imperfect state of his faculties to come, in any point of his being, into contact with a notion of death; or to an unreflecting acquiescence in what had been instilled into him! Has such an unfold of the mysteries of nature, though he may have forgotten his former self, ever noticed the early, obstinate, and unappeasable inquisitiveness of children upon the subject of origination? This single fact proves outwardly the monstrousness of those suppositions: for, if we had no direct external testimony that the minds of very young children meditate feelingly upon death and immortality, these inquiries, which we all know they are perpetually making concerning the *whence*, do necessarily include correspondent habits of interrogation concerning the *whither*. Origin and tendency are notions inseparably co-relative. Never did a child stand by the side of a running stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelled to follow this question by another: "Towards what abyss is it in progress? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx?" And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be sea or ocean, accompanied perhaps with an image gathered from a map, or from the real object in nature—these might have been the *letter*, but the *spirit* of the answer must have been *as* inevitably,—a receptacle without bounds or dimensions;—nothing less than infinity. We may, then, be justified in asserting, that the sense of immortality, if not a co-existent and twin birth with Reason, is among the earliest of her offspring: and we may further assert, that from these conjoined, and under their countenance, the human affections are gradually formed and opened out. This is not the place to enter into the recesses of these investigations; but the subject requires me here to make a plain avowal, that, for my own part, it is to me inconceivable, that the sympathies of love towards each other, which grow with our growth, could

ever attain any new strength, or even preserve the old, after we had received from the outward senses the impression of death, and were in the habit of having that impression daily renewed and its accompanying feeling brought home to ourselves, and to those we love ; if the same were not counteracted by those communications with our internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides, and has through that coincidence alone (for otherwise it could not possess it) a power to affect us. I confess, with me the conviction is absolute, that, if the impression and sense of death were not thus counterbalanced, such a hollowness would pervade the whole system of things, such a want of correspondence and consistency, a disproportion so astounding betwixt means and ends, that there could be no repose, no joy. Were we to grow up unfostered by this genial warmth, a frost would chill the spirit, so penetrating and powerful, that there could be no motions of the life of love ; and infinitely less could we have any wish to be remembered after we had passed away from a world in which each man had moved about like a shadow.—If, then, in a creature endowed with the faculties of foresight and reason, the social affections could not have unfolded themselves uncountenanced by the faith that Man is an immortal being ; and if, consequently, neither could the individual dying have had a desire to survive in the remembrance of his fellows, nor on their side could they have felt a wish to preserve for future times vestiges of the departed ; it follows, as a final inference, that without the belief in immortality, wherein these several desires originate, neither monuments nor epitaphs, in affectionate or laudatory commemoration of the deceased, could have existed in the world.

Simonides, it is related, upon landing in a strange country, found the corse of an unknown person lying by the sea-side ; he buried it, and was honoured throughout Greece for the piety of that act. Another ancient Philosopher, chancing to fix his eyes upon a dead body, regarded the same with slight, if not with contempt ; saying, “ See the shell of the flown bird ! ” But it is not to be supposed that the moral and tender-hearted Simonides was incapable of the lofty movements of thought, to which that other Sage gave way at the moment while his soul was intent only upon the indestructible being ; nor, on the other hand, that he, in whose sight a lifeless human body was of no more value than the worthless shell from which

the living fowl had departed, would not, in a different mood of mind, have been affected by those earthly considerations which had incited the philosophic Poet to the performance of that pious duty. And with regard to this latter we may be assured that, if he had been destitute of the capability of communing with the more exalted thoughts that appertain to human nature, he would have cared no more for the corse of the stranger than for the dead body of a seal or porpoise which might have been cast up by the waves. We respect the corporeal frame of Man, not merely because it is the habitation of a rational, but of an immortal Soul. Each of these Sages was in sympathy with the best feelings of our nature; feelings which, though they seem opposite to each other, have another and a finer connection than that of contrast.—It is a connection formed through the subtle progress by which, both in the natural and the moral world, qualities pass insensibly into their contraries, and things revolve upon each other. As, in sailing upon the orb of this planet, a voyage towards the regions where the sun sets, conducts gradually to the quarter where we have been accustomed to behold it come forth at its rising; and, in like manner, a voyage towards the east, the birth-place in our imagination of the morning, leads finally to the quarter where the sun is last seen when he departs from our eyes; so the contemplative Soul, travelling in the direction of mortality, advances to the country of everlasting life; and, in like manner, may she continue to explore those cheerful tracts, till she is brought back, for her advantage and benefit, to the land of transitory things—of sorrow and of tears.

On a midway point, therefore, which commands the thoughts and feelings of the two Sages whom we have represented in contrast, does the Author of that species of composition, the laws of which it is our present purpose to explain, take his stand. Accordingly, recurring to the twofold desire of guarding the remains of the deceased and preserving their memory, it may be said that a sepulchral monument is a tribute to a man as a human being; and that an epitaph (in the ordinary meaning attached to the word) includes this general feeling and something more; and is a record to preserve the memory of the dead, as a tribute due to his individual worth, for a satisfaction to the sorrowing hearts of the survivors, and for the common benefit of the living: which record is to be accomplished, not in a general manner, but, where it can,

in close connection with the bodily remains of the deceased: and these, it may be added, among the modern nations of Europe, are deposited within, or contiguous to, their places of worship. In ancient times, as is well known, it was the custom to bury the dead beyond the walls of towns and cities; and among the Greeks and Romans they were frequently interred by the way-sides.

I could here pause with pleasure, and invite the Reader to indulge with me in contemplation of the advantages which must have attended such a practice. We might ruminate upon the beauty which the monuments, thus placed, must have borrowed from the surrounding images of nature—from the trees, the wild flowers, from a stream running perhaps within sight or hearing, from the beaten road stretching its weary length hard by. Many tender similitudes must these objects have presented to the mind of the traveller leaning upon one of the tombs, or reposing in the coolness of its shade, whether he had halted from weariness or in compliance with the invitation, “Pause, Traveller!” so often found upon the monuments. And to its epitaph also must have been supplied strong appeals to visible appearances or immediate impressions, lively and affecting analogies of life as a journey—death as a sleep overcoming the tired wayfarer—of misfortune as a storm that falls suddenly upon him—of beauty as a flower that passeth away, or of innocent pleasure as one that may be gathered—of virtue that standeth firm as a rock against the beating waves;—of hope “undermined insensibly like the poplar by the side of the river that has fed it,” or blasted in a moment like a pine-tree by the stroke of lightning upon the mountain-top—of admonitions and heart-stirring remembrances, like a refreshing breeze that comes without warning, or the taste of the waters of an unexpected fountain. These, and similar suggestions, must have given, formerly, to the language of the senseless stone a voice enforced and endeared by the benignity of that nature with which it was in unison.—We, in modern times, have lost much of these advantages; and they are but in a small degree counterbalanced to the inhabitants of large towns and cities, by the custom of depositing the dead within, or contiguous to, their places of worship; however splendid or imposing may be the appearance of those edifices, or however interesting or salutary the recollections associated with them. Even were it not true that tombs lose their monitory virtue when thus obtruded upon the notice of men occupied with

the cares of the world, and too often sullied and defiled by those cares, yet still, when death is in our thoughts, nothing can make amends for the want of the soothing influences of nature, and for the absence of those types of renovation and decay, which the fields and woods offer to the notice of the serious and contemplative mind. To feel the force of this sentiment, let a man only compare in imagination the unsightly manner in which our monuments are crowded together in the busy, noisy, unclean, and almost grassless church-yard of a large town, with the still seclusion of a Turkish cemetery, in some remote place; and yet further sanctified by the grove of cypress in which it is embosomed. Thoughts in the same temper as these have already been expressed with true sensibility by an ingenious Poet of the present day. The subject of his poem is "All Saints Church, Derby:" he has been deploring the forbidding and unseemly appearance of its burial-ground, and uttering a wish, that in past times the practice had been adopted of interring the inhabitants of large towns in the country:—

"Then in some rural, calm, sequestered spot,
Where healing Nature her benignant look
Ne'er changes, save at that lorn season, when,
With tresses drooping o'er her sable stole,
She yearly mourns the mortal doom of man,
Her noblest work, (so Israel's virgins erst,
With annual moan upon the mountains wept
Their fairest gone,) there in that rural scene,
So placid, so congenial to the wish
The Christian feels, of peaceful rest within
The silent grave, I would have stayed.

* * * * *

—wandered forth, where the cold dew of heaven
Lay on the humbler graves around, what time
The pale moon gazed upon the turfy mounds,
Pensive, as though like me, in lonely muse,
'Twere brooding on the dead inhumed beneath.
There while with him, the holy man of Uz,
O'er human destiny I sympathised,
Counting the long, long periods prophecy
Decrees to roll, ere the great day arrives
Of resurrection, oft the blue-eyed Spring
Had met me with her blossoms, as the Dove,
Of old, returned with olive leaf, to cheer

The Patriarch mourning o'er a world destroyed :
And I would bless her visit ; for to me
'Tis sweet to trace the consonance that links
As one, the works of Nature and the word
Of God."—

JOHN EDWARDS.

A village church-yard, lying as it does in the lap of nature, may indeed be most favourably contrasted with that of a town of crowded population ; and sepulture therein combines many of the best tendencies which belong to the mode practised by the Ancients, with others peculiar to itself. The sensations of pious cheerfulness, which attend the celebration of the sabbath-day in rural places, are profitably chastised by the sight of the graves of kindred and friends, gathered together in that general home towards which the thoughtful yet happy spectators themselves are journeying. Hence a parish-church, in the stillness of the country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead ; a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both.

As, then, both in cities and in villages, the dead are deposited in close connection with our places of worship, with us the composition of an epitaph naturally turns, still more than among the nations of antiquity, upon the most serious and solemn affections of the human mind ; upon departed worth—upon personal or social sorrow and admiration—upon religion, individual and social—upon time, and upon eternity. Accordingly, it suffices in ordinary cases, to secure a composition of this kind from censure, that it contain nothing that shall shock or be inconsistent with this spirit. But, to entitle an epitaph to praise, more than this is necessary. It ought to contain some thought or feeling belonging to the mortal or immortal part of our nature touchingly expressed ; and if that be done, however general or even trite the sentiment may be, every man of pure mind will read the words with pleasure and gratitude. A husband bewails a wife ; a parent breathes a sigh of disappointed hope over a lost child ; a son utters a sentiment of filial reverence for a departed father or mother ; a friend perhaps inscribes an encomium recording the companionable qualities, or the solid virtues, of the tenant of the grave, whose departure has left a sadness upon his memory. This and a pious admonition to the living, and a humble expression of Christian confidence in immortality, is the language of a

thousand church-yards; and it does not often happen that anything, in a greater degree discriminate or appropriate to the dead or to the living, is to be found in them. This want of discrimination has been ascribed by Dr. Johnson, in his *Essay upon the epitaphs of Pope*, to two causes; first, the scantiness of the objects of human praise; and, secondly, the want of variety in the characters of men; or, to use his own words, "to the fact, that the greater part of mankind have no character at all." Such language may be holden without blame among the generalities of common conversation; but does not become a critic and a moralist speaking seriously upon a serious subject. The objects of admiration in human nature are not scanty, but abundant: and every man has a character of his own, to the eye that has skill to perceive it. The real cause of the acknowledged want of discrimination in sepulchral memorials is this: That to analyse the characters of others, especially of those whom we love, is not a common or natural employment of men at any time. We are not anxious unerringly to understand the constitution of the minds of those who have soothed, who have cheered, who have supported us: with whom we have been long and daily pleased or delighted. The affections are their own justification. The light of love in our hearts is a satisfactory evidence that there is a body of worth in the minds of our friends or kindred, whence that light has proceeded. We shrink from the thought of placing their merits and defects to be weighed against each other in the nice balance of pure intellect; nor do we find much temptation to detect the shades by which a good quality or virtue is discriminated in them from an excellence known by the same general name as it exists in the mind of another; and, least of all, do we incline to these refinements when under the pressure of sorrow, admiration, or regret, or when actuated by any of those feelings which incite men to prolong the memory of their friends and kindred, by records placed in the bosom of the all-uniting and equalising receptacle of the dead.

The first requisite, then, in an Epitaph is, that it should speak, in a tone which shall sink into the heart, the general language of humanity as connected with the subject of death—the source from which an epitaph proceeds—of death, and of life. To be born and to die are the two points in which all men feel themselves to be in absolute coincidence. This general language may be uttered so strikingly as to entitle an epitaph to high praise; yet it

cannot lay claim to the highest unless other excellencies be superadded. Passing through all intermediate steps, we will attempt to determine at once what these excellencies are, and wherein consists the perfection of this species of composition.—It will be found to lie in a due proportion of the common or universal feeling of humanity to sensations excited by a distinct and clear conception, conveyed to the reader's mind, of the individual, whose death is deplored and whose memory is to be preserved; at least of his character as, after death, it appeared to those who loved him and lament his loss. The general sympathy ought to be quickened, provoked, and diversified, by particular thoughts, actions, images,—circumstances of age, occupation, manner of life, prosperity which the deceased had known, or adversity to which he had been subject; and these ought to be bound together and solemnised into one harmony by the general sympathy. The two powers should temper, restrain, and exalt each other. The reader ought to know who and what the man was whom he is called upon to think of with interest. A distinct conception should be given (implicitly where it can, rather than explicitly) of the individual lamented.—But the writer of an epitaph is not an anatomist, who dissects the internal frame of the mind; he is not even a painter, who executes a portrait at leisure and in entire tranquillity: his delineation, we must remember, is performed by the side of the grave; and, what is more, the grave of one whom he loves and admires. What purity and brightness is that virtue clothed in, the image of which must no longer bless our living eyes! The character of a deceased friend or beloved kinsman is not seen, no—nor ought to be seen, otherwise than as a tree through a tender haze or a luminous mist, that spiritualises and beautifies it; that takes away, indeed, but only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted may appear more dignified and lovely; may impress and affect the more. Shall we say, then, that this is not truth, not a faithful image; and that, accordingly, the purposes of commemoration cannot be answered?—It *is* truth, and of the highest order; for, though doubtless things are not apparent which did exist; yet, the object being looked at through this medium, parts and proportions are brought into distinct view which before had been only imperfectly or unconsciously seen: it is truth hallowed by love—the joint offspring of the worth of the dead and the affections of the living! This may easily be brought to the test. Let one, whose eyes have been

sharpened by personal hostility to discover what was amiss in the character of a good man, hear the tidings of his death, and what a change is wrought in a moment! Enmity melts away; and, as it disappears, unsightliness, disproportion, and deformity, vanish; and, through the influence of commiseration, a harmony of love and beauty succeeds. Bring such a man to the tombstone on which shall be inscribed an epitaph on his adversary, composed in the spirit which we have recommended. Would he turn from it as from an idle tale? No;—the thoughtful look, the sigh, and perhaps the involuntary tear, would testify that it had a sane, a generous, and good meaning; and that on the writer's mind had remained an impression which was a true abstract of the character of the deceased; that his gifts and graces were remembered in the simplicity in which they ought to be remembered. The composition and quality of the mind of a virtuous man, contemplated by the side of the grave where his body is mouldering, ought to appear, and be felt as something midway between what he was on earth walking about with his living frailties, and what he may be presumed to be as a Spirit in heaven.

It suffices, therefore, that the trunk and the main branches of the worth of the deceased be boldly and unaffectedly represented. Any further detail, minutely and scrupulously pursued, especially if this be done with laborious and antithetic discriminations, must inevitably frustrate its own purpose; forcing the passing Spectator to this conclusion,—either that the dead did not possess the merits ascribed to him, or that they who have raised a monument to his memory, and must therefore be supposed to have been closely connected with him, were incapable of perceiving those merits; or at least during the act of composition had lost sight of them; for, the understanding having been so busy in its petty occupation, how could the heart of the mourner be other than cold? and in either of these cases, whether the fault be on the part of the buried person or the survivors, the memorial is unaffecting and profitless.

Much better is it to fall short in discrimination than to pursue it too far, or to labour it unfeelingly. For in no place are we so much disposed to dwell upon those points, of nature and condition, wherein all men resemble each other, as in the temple where the universal Father is worshipped, or by the side of the grave which gathers all human Beings to itself, and “equalises the lofty and the

low." We suffer and we weep with the same heart; we love and are anxious for one another in one spirit; our hopes look to the same quarter; and the virtues by which we are all to be furthered and supported, as patience, meekness, good-will, justice, temperance, and temperate desires, are in an equal degree the concern of us all. Let an Epitaph, then, contain at least these acknowledgments to our common nature; nor let the sense of their importance be sacrificed to a balance of opposite qualities or minute distinctions in individual character; which if they do not, (as will for the most part be the case,) when examined, resolve themselves into a trick of words, will, even when they are true and just, for the most part be grievously out of place; for, as it is probable that few only have explored these intricacies of human nature, so can the tracing of them be interesting only to a few. But an epitaph is not a proud writing shut up for the studious: it is exposed to all—to the wise and the most ignorant; it is condescending, perspicuous, and lovingly solicits regard; its story and admonitions are brief, that the thoughtless, the busy, and indolent, may not be deterred, nor the impatient tired: the stooping old man cons the engraven record like a second horn-book;—the child is proud that he can read it;—and the stranger is introduced through its mediation to the company of a friend: it is concerning all, and for all:—in the church-yard it is open to the day; the sun looks down upon the stone, and the rains of heaven beat against it.

Yet, though the writer who would excite sympathy is bound in this case, more than in any other, to give proof that he himself has been moved, it is to be remembered, that to raise a monument is a sober and a reflective act; that the inscription which it bears is intended to be permanent, and for universal perusal; and that, for this reason, the thoughts and feelings expressed should be permanent also—liberated from that weakness and anguish of sorrow which is in nature transitory, and which with instinctive decency retires from notice. The passions should be subdued, the emotions controlled; strong, indeed, but nothing ungovernable or wholly involuntary. Seemliness requires this, and truth requires it also: for how can the narrator otherwise be trusted? Moreover, a grave is a tranquillising object: resignation in course of time springs up from it as naturally as the wild flowers, besprinkling the turf with which it may be covered, or gathering round the monument by which it is defended.

The very form and substance of the monument which has received the inscription, and the appearance of the letters, testifying with what a slow and laborious hand they must have been engraven, might seem to reproach the author who had given way on this occasion to transports of mind, or to quick turns of conflicting passion ; though the same might constitute the life and beauty of a funeral oration or elegiac poem.

These sensations and judgments, acted upon perhaps unconsciously, have been one of the main causes why epitaphs so often personate the deceased, and represent him as speaking from his own tomb-stone. The departed Mortal is introduced telling you himself that his pains are gone ; that a state of rest is come ; and he conjures you to weep for him no longer. He admonishes with the voice of one experienced in the vanity of those affections which are confined to earthly objects, and gives a verdict like a superior Being, performing the office of a judge, who has no temptations to mislead him, and whose decision cannot but be dispassionate. Thus is death disarmed of its sting, and affliction unsubstantialised. By this tender fiction, the survivors bind themselves to a sedater sorrow, and employ the intervention of the imagination in order that the reason may speak her own language earlier than she would otherwise have been enabled to do. This shadowy interposition also harmoniously unites the two worlds of the living and the dead by their appropriate affections. And it may be observed, that here we have an additional proof of the propriety with which sepulchral inscriptions were referred to the consciousness of immortality as their primal source.

I do not speak with a wish to recommend that an epitaph should be cast in this mould preferably to the still more common one, in which what is said comes from the survivors directly ; but rather to point out how natural those feelings are which have induced men, in all states and ranks of society, so frequently to adopt this mode. And this I have done chiefly in order that the laws, which ought to govern the composition of the other, may be better understood. This latter mode, namely, that in which the survivors speak in their own persons, seems to me upon the whole greatly preferable : as it admits a wider range of notices ; and, above all, because, excluding the fiction which is the groundwork of the other, it rests upon a more solid basis.

Enough has been said to convey our notion of a perfect

epitaph ; but it must be borne in mind that one is meant which will best answer the *general* ends of that species of composition. According to the course pointed out, the worth of private life, through all varieties of situation and character, will be most honourably and profitably preserved in memory. Nor would the model recommended less suit public men, in all instances save of those persons who by the greatness of their services in the employments of peace or war, or by the surpassing excellence of their works in art, literature, or science, have made themselves not only universally known, but have filled the heart of their country with everlasting gratitude. Yet I must here pause to correct myself. In describing the general tenour of thought which epitaphs ought to hold, I have omitted to say, that if it be the *actions* of a man, or even some *one* conspicuous or beneficial act of local or general utility, which have distinguished him, and excited a desire that he should be remembered, then, of course, ought the attention to be directed chiefly to those actions or that act : and such sentiments dwelt upon as naturally arise out of them or it. Having made this necessary distinction, I proceed.—The mighty benefactors of mankind, as they are not only known by the immediate survivors, but will continue to be known familiarly to latest posterity, do not stand in need of biographic sketches, in such a place ; nor of delineations of character to individualise them. This is already done by their Works, in the memories of men. Their naked names, and a grand comprehensive sentiment of civic gratitude, patriotic love, or human admiration—or the utterance of some elementary principle most essential in the constitution of true virtue ;—or a declaration touching that pious humility and self-abasement, which are ever most profound as minds are most susceptible of genuine exaltation—or an intuition, communicated in adequate words, of the sublimity of intellectual power ;—these are the only tribute which can here be paid—the only offering that upon such an altar would not be unworthy.

“ What needs my Shakspeare for his honoured bones
 The labour of an age in piled stones,
 Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
 Under a star-ypointing pyramid ?
 Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,
 What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name ?
 Thou in our wonder and astonishment

Hast built thyself a livelong monument,
 And so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
 That kings for such a tomb would wish to die."
 —W. W.

"And spires whose 'silent finger points to heaven'"
 (page 187).

An instinctive taste teaches men to build their churches in flat countries with spire-steeples, which as they cannot be referred to any other object, point as with silent finger to the sky and stars, and sometimes, when they reflect the brazen light of a rich though rainy sunset, appear like a pyramid of flame burning heaven-ward. See "The Friend," by S. T. Coleridge, No. 14, p. 223.

*"That sycamore, which annually holds
 Within its shade as in a stately tent" (page 248).*

*"This Sycamore oft musical with Bees ;
 Such Tents the Patriarchs loved."*
 S. T. COLERIDGE.—W. W.

"Perish the roses and the flowers of kings" (page 260).

The "Transit gloria mundi" is finely expressed in the Introduction to the Foundation-charters of some of the ancient Abbeys. Some expressions here used are taken from that of the Abbey of St. Mary's Furness, the translation of which is as follows :—

"Considering every day the uncertainty of life, that the roses and flowers of Kings, Emperors, and Dukes, and the crowns and palms of all the great, wither and decay ; and that all things, with an uninterrupted course, tend to dissolution and death : I therefore," etc.—W. W.

—————"Earth has lent
 Her waters, Air her breezes" (page 268).

In treating this subject, it was impossible not to recollect, with gratitude, the pleasing picture, which, in his Poem of the Fleece, the excellent and amiable Dyer has given of the influences of manufacturing industry upon the face of this Island. He wrote at a time when machinery was first beginning to be introduced, and his benevolent heart prompted him to augur from it nothing but good. Truth has compelled me to dwell upon the baneful effects

arising out of an ill-regulated and excessive application of powers so admirable in themselves.—W. W.

“*Binding herself by statute*” (page 296).

The discovery of Dr. Bell affords marvellous facilities for carrying this into effect ; and it is impossible to over-rate the benefit which might accrue to humanity from the universal application of this simple engine under an enlightened and conscientious government.—W. W.

EDITOR'S NOTES.

“The Excursion” includes work of as early a date as the autumn of 1795 (see the “I. F.” note on this poem, p. 313), and work as late, perhaps, as the year of publication, 1814. The story of “Margaret, or the Ruined Cottage,” in Book I., seems to have been at first designed as an independent poem, and was begun in 1795 ; it was substantially complete in 1797-1798, but in Dec., 1801, Wordsworth was again at work upon it. On March 11, 1798, Wordsworth mentions (Knight’s “Life,” vol. i. p. 148) that he has written 706 lines of “The Recluse, or Views of Nature, Man, and Society.” Coleridge, in the same month, writes of 1,200 lines by Wordsworth, “superior . . . to anything in our language which in any way resembles it.” These 1,200 lines were probably made up of “The Ruined Cottage” (perhaps ll. 1-107 and ll. 438-970 of “The Excursion” Book i.) and the 706 lines of “The Recluse.” The whole was probably afterwards included in “The Excursion.” On Oct. 9, 1800, Coleridge mentions Wordsworth’s “The Pedlar” as a long blank-verse poem ; there was some thought of publishing it in a volume with “Christabel.” From Dorothy Wordsworth’s Journal we learn that Wordsworth was working at “The Pedlar” at intervals from Dec., 1801, to March 9, 1802 (adding, perhaps, the greater part of ll. 108-437 of “The Excursion” Book i.). On July 8, 1802, Dorothy writes : “William was looking at ‘The Pedlar’ when I got up. He arranged it, and after tea I wrote it out—280 lines.” In Dec., 1804, Wordsworth writes to Sir G. Beaumont of “The Pedlar,” 2,000 lines, as intended to form part of “The Recluse.” Thus “The Pedlar” at different times probably meant (1) “The Tale of Margaret,” (2) “The Excursion” Book i., (3) “The Excursion,” Books i. and ii. The greater part of “The Excursion,” however, belongs

to 1808-1811, the period of Wordsworth's residence at Allan Bank. The first edition—a quarto—1814, consisted of 500 copies, and sold slowly. In the second edition, 1820—an octavo—the changes were very few and unimportant. For the next edition, that of 1827, the poem was carefully revised, the main feature of the revision being the strengthening of feeble passages by condensation. A long passage at the close of Book VI., telling of a widower's happy second marriage, was now omitted, (see pp. 375-377), and in connection with this it may be noted that the incident of the second marriage of the Wanderer's mother in Book I. was also omitted. Were we in the dark as to the chronology of Wordsworth's poems, something might be learnt by studying the omission or alteration in this edition of "The Excursion," and in other poems, of the following words : *frame* (verb) *towards* and *toward*, *that* and *which*, *sweet*. Again in 1832 some changes were effected, and a more extensive revision was made for the edition of 1837. Many of the alterations, however, of 1827, 1832, and 1837 are in details of workmanship or manipulation, and some of these I have not thought it necessary to record. Of the alterations made in 1845 several are of considerable interest, and in some instances they consist of additions. These additions remaining in the text, the chief results of this last revision can be traced only by observing the date 1845 in the notes, and referring to the text; and such a scrutiny will repay the careful student. In certain cases, as towards the close of Book I. (ll. 934-940 and ll. 952-955) and elsewhere, the additions indicate the added importance which Wordsworth attached to Christian faith; see also Book V., ll. 824-826; Book VI., ll. 766-774; Book IX., ll. 225-228. The collation in the present edition, while not aiming at exhaustiveness, omits nothing which affects in any noteworthy way the thought of the poem; and I am glad to be able to refer to the collation of "The Excursion" in Professor Knight's edition as being full and (apart from a narrow margin of inevitable error) as accurate. The reader of Professor Knight's notes, however, may almost invariably alter the date 1849 to 1845, and he should be on his guard against the erroneous numbering of lines in every book of the poem. If notes of a topographical kind be desired, in addition to what is given in the Fenwick note, they may be found in Professor Knight's edition; but it should be remembered that Wordsworth's topography, though founded on fact, is ideal, and not literal.

BOOK I.

L. 6 (1827); previously two lines :

“ From many a brooding cloud ; far as the sight
Could reach, those many shadows lay in spots ”.

Ll. 16, 17 (1827); in 1814-1820 :

“ By that impending covert made more soft
More low and distant ! ”

Ll. 17-20 (1845); previously :

“ Other lot was mine ;
Yet with good hope that soon I should obtain
As grateful resting place, and livelier joy.”

L. 22, “ steps that ” (1827); previously “ feet which.”
In the same line, “ turf ” (1845); previously “ ground.”

L. 26, “ moorland ” (1845); previously “ level.”

Ll. 39-41 (1827); previously :

“ And in the middle of the public way
Stationed, as if to rest himself, with face
Turned tow'rds the sun then setting, while that staff
Afforded to his Figure, as he stood ”.

L. 43, “ his countenance as he stood ” (1845); in 1814,
“ the countenance of the Man ”; in 1827, “ his counte-
nance meanwhile.”

L. 51, “ Under the covert ” (1845); previously
“ Beneath the shelter.”

Ll. 52-55 (1827, with the reading, “ were pass'd My
school-days ”; altered to present text in 1845); in 1814-
1820 :

“ We were tried Friends : I from my Childhood up
Had known him.—In a little Town obscure,
A market-village, seated in a tract
Of mountains, where my school-day time was pass'd,
One room he owned, the fifth part of a house,
A place to which he drew from time to time,”

Ll. 62, 63 (1827); previously :

“ . . . we wander'd through the woods,
A pair of random travellers; we sate—
We walked; he pleas'd me with his sweet discourse ”.

L. 111 (1827); previously in place of this one line the following passage:

“ His Father dwelt ; and died in poverty ;
While He, whose lowly fortune I retrace,
The youngest of three sons, was yet a babe,
A little One—unconscious of their loss.
But ere he had outgrown his infant days
His widowed Mother, for a second Mate,
Espoused the Teacher of the Village School ;
Who on her offspring zealously bestowed
Needful instruction ; not alone in arts
Which to his humble duties appertained,
But in the lore of right and wrong, the rule
Of human kindness, in the peaceful ways
Of honesty, and holiness severe.”

L. 122 (1827); previously “To his Step-father’s School, that stood alone”.

Ll. 137-139 (1845); in 1814-1820:

“ Great objects on his mind, with portraiture
And colour so distinct, that on his mind
They lay like substances, and almost seemed
To haunt the bodily sense. He had received
(Vigorous in native genius as he was) ”.

The last of these lines was omitted 1827, the rest remaining unchanged.

Ll. 197-199 (1827); previously:

“ From early childhood, even, as hath been said,
From his sixth year, he had been sent abroad
In summer to tend herds: such was the task
Thenceforward ’till the later days of youth.
O then what soul was his, when, on the tops
Of the high mountains, he beheld the sun ”.

Ll. 202, 203 (1845); previously:

“ . . . mass, beneath him lay
In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touch’d,”

L. 227 (1832); in 1814, “There did he see the writing;
—all things there”; in 1827:

“ Responsive to the writing, all things there”.

L. 240, “In oft-recurring hours” (1827); previously
“In many a calmer hour.”

L. 252, "School-master" (1827); previously "Step-father."

L. 277 (1845); previously two lines :

"Inscribed, as with the silence of the thought,
Upon its bleak and visionary sides,"

L. 293 (1827); previously :

"He asked repose ; and I have heard him say
That often, failing at this time to gain".

Ll. 297, 298 (1827); previously :

". mist, which in the sunshine frames
A lasting tablet—for the observer's eye
Varying".

Ll. 302, 303 (1827); previously :

"Thus, even from Childhood upward, was he reared ;
For intellectual progress wanting much,
Doubtless, of needful help—yet gaining more ;"

Ll. 312-314 (1827); previously :

"The Mother strove to make her Son perceive
With what advantage he might teach a School
In the adjoining Village ; but the Youth,
Who of this service made a short essay,
Found that the wanderings of his thought were then
A misery to him ; that he must resign".

L. 323 (1827); previously "Through dusty ways, in storm, from door to door".

Ll. 324, 325 (1837); previously one line, "A vagrant Merchant bent beneath his load!"

L. 338 (1827); previously :

"He asked his Mother's blessing ; and with tears
Thanking his second Father, asked from him
Paternal blessings. The good Pair bestowed".

Ll. 352, 353 (1827); previously :

"Upon the bounties of the year, and felt
The liberty".

Ll. 382, 383 (1827); previously :

"Chosen in youth, through manhood he pursued,
Till due provision for his modest wants
Had been obtained ;—and, thereupon, resolved".

Ll. 388-391 (1827); previously :

“ and, when the summer's warmth
Invited him, would often leave his home
And journey far, revisiting those scenes
Which to his memory were most endeared.”

L. 392, “undamped” (1827); previously “untouched.”

L. 412, “Shaped” (1827); previously “Framed.”

Between l. 416 and l. 417 in edd. 1814-1820 occur two lines (omitted 1827):

“Nor could he bid them from his presence, tired
With questions and importunate demands:”

Ll. 441-443 (1827); previously :

“He had not heard my steps
As I approached; and near him did I stand
Unnotic'd in the shade, some minutes' space.”

Ll. 447, 448 (1827); previously :

“And ere the pleasant greeting that ensued
Was ended,”

Ll. 452, 453 (1827); previously :

“The fence hard by, where that aspiring shrub
Looked out upon the road.”

Ll. 494-498. Of these lines 494, 495 date from 1827; l. 496 dates from 1837; ll. 497, 498 from 1832. In 1814-1820:

“Green with the moss of years; a pensive sight
That moved my heart!—recalling former days
When I could never pass that road but She
Who lived within these walls, at my approach,”

Ll. 496-498 in 1827 were:

“There let the relic lie—fond thought—vain words!
Forgive them—never did my steps approach
This humble door but she who dwelt within”.

Ll. 550, 551 (1827); previously :

“but ere the second autumn
Her life's true Help-mate”.

Ll. 556-561 (1827); previously :

“ Was all consumed. Two children had they now,
One newly born. As I have said, it was
A time of trouble ; shoals of Artisans
Were from their daily labour turn’d adrift
To seek their bread from public charity,”

Ll. 564, 565 (1827); previously “ hedges ” and “ his dwelling.”

L. 576, “ mingled ” (1837); previously “ blended.”

L. 583 (1837); previously “ Without an errand, would direct his steps,”

Ll. 597, 598 (1845); previously :

“ Is filling all the air with melody;
Why should a tear be in an Old Man’s eye ? ”

Ll. 619-621 (1827); previously :

“ There was a heart-felt chillness in my veins.—
I rose ; and turning from the breezy shade,
Went forth into the open air, and stood
To drink the comfort of the warmer sun.”

Ll. 644-648 (1827); previously :

“ And glad I was, when, halting by yon gate
That leads from the green lane, once more I saw
These lofty elm-trees. Long I did not rest :
With many pleasant thoughts I chear’d my way
O’er the flat Common.—Having reached the door
I knock’d, and, when I entered with the hope
Of usual greeting, Margaret looked at me”.

Ll. 673-676 (1832); previously :

“ Which placed it there : and ere that day was ended,
That long and anxious day ! I learned from One
Sent hither by my Husband to impart
The heavy news,—”

L. 707 (1827); previously “ Towards the wane of Summer ; when the wheat ”.

Ll. 722-724 (1845); in 1814-1820 :

“ From the border lines
Composed of daisy and resplendent thrift,
Flowers straggling forth had on those paths encroached
Which they were used to deck :—”

In 1827-1843 :

“ Daisy-flow'rs and thrift
Had broken their trim lines, and straggled o'er
The paths they used to deck :—”

Between l. 731 and l. 732 edd. 1814-1820 gave the line (omitted 1827), “ And, as I walked before the door, it chanced.”

Ll. 742, 743 (1827) ; previously :

“ And, looking round, I saw the corner stones,
Till then unnotic'd, on either side the door ”.

L. 774, “ God ” (1832) ; previously “ Heaven.”

L. 814, “ When ” (1845) ; previously “ Ere.”

Ll. 831, 832 (1845) ; previously :

“ Once again
I turned towards the garden gate, and saw,”

Ll. 846, 847 (1845) ; previously :

“ Towards the House
Together we returned ; and she enquired ”.

Ll. 934-940. Here an important change was made, and again in ll. 952-955, in 1845, the earlier feeling expressed being more Stoical ; the later, Christian. Previous to 1845 for 934-940 stood the lines :

“ Be wise and chearful ; and no longer read
The forms of things with an unworthy eye.”

Professor Knight gives from MS. a slightly different version of the added lines.

Ll. 952-955 (1845) ; previously :

“ Appeared an idle dream, that could not live
Where meditation was. I turned away,”

BOOK II.

Ll. 22, 23 (1827) ; previously :

“ Than this obscure Itinerant (an obscure
But a high-souled and tender-hearted Man)
Had skill to draw from many a ramble, far
And wide protracted, through the tamer ground ”.

Between l. 29 and l. 30 occurred in 1814-1820 a line omitted 1827, “ And pathways winding on from farm to farm.”

L. 39, "inspire" (1827); previously "supply."

Between l. 50 and l. 51 occurred in 1814-1820 a line omitted 1827, "Along the field, and in the shady grove;"

Ll. 60, 61 (1845); previously one line, "The welcome of an Inmate come from far."

L. 71, "herself" (1827); previously "itself."

Ll. 87-89 (1832). Substantially the present text was reached in 1827, except that "claimed" followed "Fellow-traveller," and l. 89 opened with "An absolute." In 1814:

"My Fellow-traveller said with earnest voice,
As if the thought were but a moment old,
That I must yield myself without reserve
To his disposal. Glad was I of this."

Ll. 111-114 (1827); previously:

"Mount slowly Sun! and may our journey lie
Awhile within the shadow of this hill,
This friendly hill, a shelter from thy beams!
Such is the summer Pilgrim's frequent wish;
And as that wish, with prevalence of thanks
For present good o'er fear of future ill,
Stole in among the morning's better thoughts,"

L. 119 (1827); previously "ear, did to the question yield".

Ll. 168, 169 (1827); previously:

"Upon the humblest ground of social life,
Doth at this day, I trust, the blossoms bear
Of piety and simple innocence."

Ll. 171-174 (1827); previously:

"And, as he shewed in study forward zeal,
All helps were sought, all measures strained, that He,
By due scholastic discipline prepared,
Might to the Ministry be called: which done,
Partly through lack of better hopes—and part
Perhaps incited by a curious mind,
In early life he undertook the charge".

Ll. 196, 197 (1845); previously:

" How full their joy,
How free their love! nor did their ['that' 1827 onwards]
love decay;
Nor joy abate, till, pitiable doom!"

Ll. 204, 205 (1845); previously :

“By pain to turn his thoughts towards the grave,
And face the regions of Eternity.”

Between l. 213 and l. 214 (then opening with “The voice”) appeared 1814-1820 the following :

“That sudden light had power to pierce the gloom
In which his Spirit, friendless upon earth,
In separation dwelt, and solitude.”

Ll. 227, 228 (1827); previously :

“That righteous Cause of freedom did, we know,
Combine, for one hostility, as friends,”

L. 290, “through” (1827); previously “and.”

Ll. 304, 305 (1827); previously :

“—And thus beset, and finding in himself
Nor pleasure nor tranquillity, at last,
After a wandering course of discontent
In foreign Lands, and inwardly oppressed”.

L. 311 (1845); previously “In self-indulging spleen,
that doth not want.”

L. 319 (1827); previously four lines :

“Now, suddenly diverging, he began
To climb upon its western side a Ridge
Pathless and smooth, a long and steep ascent;
As if the object of his quest had been”.

L. 321, “lofty” (1845); previously “boastful.”

Ll. 323, 324 (1827); previously :

“We clomb without a track to guide our steps;
And, on the summit, reached a heathy plain,”

Ll. 326, 327 (1827); previously :

“. . . region! and I walked
In weariness:”

Ll. 370, 371 (1827); previously :

“On these and other kindred thoughts intent,
In silence by my Comrade's side I lay,”

Compare with this account of the funeral a passage in Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal for Sept. 3, 1800, given in Knight's “Life of Wordsworth,” vol. i. p. 270.

L. 377, "upon" (1827); previously "towards."

L. 383, "Said the old man," (1845); previously "The Wanderer cried,"

L. 412 (1827); previously two lines :

"It was an Entry, narrow as a door ;
A passage whose brief windings opened out".

Ll. 417, 418 (1827); previously :

". . . . hung a tiny roof,
Or penthouse, which most quaintly had been framed
By thrusting two rude sticks into the wall".

L. 424 (1827); previously two lines :

"Whose simple skill had thronged the grassy floor
With work of frame less solid, a proud show".

Ll. 430, 431 (1827); previously :

"Who, having entered, carelessly looked round,
And now would have passed on :"

Ll. 436, 437 (1845); previously :

". . . . 'Gracious Heaven !'
The Wanderer cried, 'it cannot but be his, "

Ll. 450, 453 (1827); previously :

"He sometimes played with them ; and here hath sate
Far oftener by himself. This Book, I guess,
Hath been forgotten in his careless way
Left here when he was occupied in mind ;
And by the cottage-children has been found."

Ll. 461, 462 (1827); previously :

"Nor, with the knowledge which my mind possessed,
Could I behold it undisturbed : 'tis strange,
I grant, and stranger still had been to see
The Man, who was its Owner, dwelling here,"

L. 498 (1827); previously "I knew, from the appearance and the dress,"

Ll. 512-515 (1827); previously :

"Glad was my Comrade now, though he at first,
I doubt not, had been more surprized than glad.
But now, recovered from the shock and calm,
He soberly advanced ; and to the Man
Gave cheerful greeting.—Vivid was the light
Which flashed at this from out the Other's eyes ;"

Ll. 516, 517 (1845); previously :

“ He was all fire : the sickness from his face
Passed like a fancy that is swept away ; ”

Ll. 521, 522 (1843); previously one line, “ And much
of what had vanished was returned,”

Ll. 540, 541 (1845); previously :

“ He knows not why ; but he, perchance, this day,
Is shedding Orphan's tears ; and you yourself ”.

Ll. 553-555 (1837); in 1814-1820, and again 1832 :

“ Often have I stopped
When on my way, I could not chuse but stop,”

In 1827, “ Often have I stopped, So much,” etc. (omitting
l. 554).

L. 586, “ towards the open grave ” (1837); previously
“ towards the grave.”

Ll. 622-624 (1827); previously :

“ this Solitude,
(That seems by Nature framed to be the seat
And very bosom of pure innocence) ”.

L. 633 (1845); previously “ In what it [‘ she ’ 1827,
onwards] values most—the love of God.”

Ll. 636-638 (1837, with “ towards ” for the “ toward ”
of 1843); previously :

“ Saying this he led
Towards the Cottage;—”

L. 642, “ beetling rock ” (1827); previously “ Valley's
brink.”

Ll. 645-646 (1845); previously :

“ Was silent ; and the solitary clock
Ticked, as I thought, with melancholy sound.—”

Ll. 664, 665 (1827); previously :

“ and here and there
Lay, intermixed with these, mechanic tools,
And scraps of paper,—some I could perceive ”.

L. 676, “ store ” (1845); previously “ load.”

Ll. 679-681 (1832); in 1814 :

“ Butter that had imbibed a golden tinge,
A hue like that of yellow meadow flowers
Reflected faintly in a silent pool.”

In 1827 :

“Butter that had imbibed a golden tinge
From meadow flowers, hue delicate as theirs
Faintly reflected in a lingering stream.”

Ll. 694, 695 (1827) ; previously :

“‘Those lusty Twins on which your eyes are cast,’
Exclaimed our Host, ‘if here you dwelt, would be’”

L. 710, “tone” (1827) ; previously “frame.”

Ll. 725-728 (1827, except that “rhapsody” stood for
“strain of rapture” 1845) ; previously :

“With brightening face
The Wanderer heard him speaking thus, and said,”

Ll. 731-733 (1827) ; beside other variations for “dis-
severed from mankind” edd. 1814-1820 had “outcast and
cut off.”

L. 781, “persevering rain” (1827) ; previously “from
mid-noon the rain.”

L. 787, “moorland” (1827) ; previously “mountain.”

Ll. 813-817 (1827) ; previously :

“And wholly without roof (in ancient time
It was a Chapel, a small Edifice
In which the Peasants of these lonely Dells
For worship met upon that central height)—
Chancing to pass this wreck of stones, we there
Espied at last the Object of our search,
Couched in a nook, and seemingly alive.
It would have moved you, had you seen the guise
In which he occupied his chosen bed,”

L. 827. The incident from which was derived the
account of the old man’s being lost and found appears in
Dorothy Wordsworth’s record of “a mountainous ramble”
of 1805 ; see Knight’s “Wordsworth,” vol. v. p. 101.

L. 833. Between this line and l. 834 occurred in edd.
1814-1820 the following lines judiciously omitted in 1827 :

“Though I am conscious that no power of words
Can body forth, no hues of speech can paint
That gorgeous spectacle—too bright and fair
Even for remembrance ; yet the attempt may give
Collateral interest to this homely Tale.”

L. 837, “boundless” (1845) ; previously “wondrous.”

L. 870 (1845); previously "Below me was the earth; this little Vale."

Ll. 884-886 (1837); previously two lines :

"Beside a genial fire; that seemed to spread
A gleam of comfort o'er his pallid face."

BOOK III.

L. 28, "she" and "her" in 1827 replaced "it" and "its."

L. 61. Between this line and l. 62 occurred the line, "Conspicuously stationed, one fair Plant," (omitted 1827).

L. 88. Between this line and l. 89 occurred the line (omitted 1827), "I cannot but incline to a belief".

L. 193 (1845); previously "The mind is full—no pain is in their sport."

L. 204, "Raised" (1827); previously "Framed."

Ll. 249-252 (1827); previously :

"As sound; with that blithe race who wore ere-while
Their golden Grasshoppers, in sign that they
Had sprung from out the soil whereon they dwelt."

L. 254. In 1814-1820 between "minds" and "then" came the words (omitted 1827):

"for doubtless, in one sense
The theme is serious ;"

L. 258, "her" (1827); previously "its."

L. 260 (1827); previously two lines :

"Of a living Ocean : or, if such may seem
Its tendency, to be engulfed and lost".

L. 341 (1827); previously two lines :

" 'Yes,' said I, 'shall the immunities to which
She doth lay claim, the precepts she bestows,'"

Ll. 401-403 (1845); previously one line, "Earth quiet and unchanged; the human Soul".

Ll. 406-408 (1845); previously :

"Such was their scheme :—thrice happy he who gained
The end proposed ! And,—though the same were missed
By multitudes, perhaps obtained by none,—
They, for the attempt, and for the pains employed,"

L. 412, "her" (1832); previously "its."

Ll. 447, 448 (1827); previously three lines:

"Sharp contradictions hourly shall arise
To cross the way; and we, perchance, by doom
Of this same life, shall be compelled to grieve".

L. 468 (1827); previously two lines:

"With sorrowful events; and we, who heard
And saw, were moved. Desirous to divert,

L. 522, "her" (1827); previously "its."

L. 532. Wordsworth's residence at Racedown and Alfoxden furnished him with materials for the description which follows.

Ll. 550-552 (1845); in 1814:

"But in due season Nature interfered,
And called my Partner to resign her share
In the pure freedom of that wedded life,"

In 1827 l. 550 is wanting, and ll. 551, 552 are as now, except that "But" stands in place of "For."

L. 564. Between this line and l. 565 in edd. 1814-1843 appeared a line (omitted 1845), "By the endearing names of nature bound."

L. 617, "unperceivable" (1845); previously "imperceptible."

L. 642 (1845); previously "From us to regions inaccessible;"

Ll. 700, 701. Compare "The Borderers," ll. 1784, 1785:

"Three sleepless nights I passed in sounding on,
Through words and things, a dim and perilous way."

Ll. 732, 733 (1832); previously one line, "Be rich by mutual and reflected wealth."

L. 738, "herself" (1827); previously "itself."

L. 782, "simply good" (1827); previously "simple good."

Ll. 787, 788 (1827); previously:

"And qualities determined.—Ruling such,
And with such herding, I maintained a strife".

L. 805 (1827); previously "Beheld a cherished image of itself."

Ll. 816-820 (1827); previously :

“ for I strangely relished
The exasperated spirit of that Land,
Which turned an angry beak against the down
Of its own breast; as if it hoped, thereby,
To disencumber its impatient wings.”

L. 881 (1845); previously “How promising the breeze!
Can aught produced”.

L. 903. Between this line and l. 904 in 1814-1820 occurred a line omitted in 1827, “In woods and wilds, or any lonely place,”

L. 915, “her” (1827); previously “its.”

L. 947, “Muccawiss,” *i.e.*, the Whip-poor-will.

Ll. 959-961 (1845); previously one line, “And cannot find; what I myself have lost,”

L. 972 (1837); previously, “Inverted trees, and rocks, and azure sky.”

L. 978 (1837): in 1814, “Perchance a roar or murmur”; in 1827, “A softened roar, a murmur”.

L. 988, “her” (1837); previously “its.”

BOOK IV.

The Argument was given in much greater detail in 1814. It was condensed in 1827 and again in 1837. Thus in 1814, after “Personal appeal” came the following: “Happy for us that the imagination and affections in our own despite mitigate the evils of that state of intellectual Slavery which the calculating understanding is so apt to produce.”

Ll. 8, 9 (1845); in 1814 l. 8, “Such pity yet surviving, with firm voice,” with l. 9 as now. In 1837:

“Such pity yet surviving, with clear voice
That falter’d not, albeit the heart was moved.”

L. 100, “work” (1827); the earlier “frame” disappearing here as in many other passages.

Ll. 150, 151 (1837); previously one line, “Through this, ’tis able to maintain its hold,”

L. 154. Between this line and l. 155 appeared in 1814 a line omitted 1827, “In framing estimates of loss and gain,”

L. 164 was added in 1837.

L. 209. Between this line and l. 210 occurred in 1814 a

line omitted 1827, "Of dissipation; countless, still-renewed,"

Ll 267-272 (1827); previously :

"Exist; so, none is now for such despair :
The two extremes are equally remote
From Truth and Reason;—do not, then, confound
One with the other, but reject them both;
And choose the middle point, whereon to build
Sound expectations. This doth he advise".

L. 324 (1827); previously preceded by two lines :

" 'Knowing'—(to adopt the energetic words
Which a time-hallowed Poet hath employed)".

Daniel's lines are from the Epistle "To the Ladie Margaret, Countesse of Cumberland."

Ll. 386, 387 (1837); previously one line, "The Red-breast feeds in winter from your hand;"

L. 399, "shaded" (1820); in 1814, "shady."

L. 403 (1845); previously two lines :

"From yon huge breast of rock, a solemn bleat;
Sent forth as if it were the Mountain's voice,"

Ll. 406-411 (1845); in 1814 :

"As he expressed; for, from the mountain's heart
The solemn bleat appeared to come; there was
No other—and the region all around
Stood silent, empty of all shape of life.
—It was a Lamb—left somewhere to itself,"

In 1827 ll. 406-408 as now, except "bleat" for "voice"; ll. 409-411 as in 1814. MS. variations are given by Professor Knight.

L. 454 was added in 1837.

L. 460, "vault" (1832); previously "arch."

L. 474 was added in 1837.

Ll. 506, 507 (1845); in 1814 :

"An animated eye; and thoughts were mine
Which this ejaculation clothed in words—".

In 1827 :

"A kindling eye;—poetic feelings rushed
Into my bosom, whence these words broke forth :"

Ll. 536-539 (1845); in 1814 two lines:

“Be this continued so from day to day,
Nor let it have an end from month to month!”

In 1827:

“Be this continued so from day to day,
Nor let the fierce commotion have an end,
Ruinous though it be, from month to month!”

L. 549, “sports” (1827); previously (? a misprint)
“spots.”

L. 552. Between this line and l. 553 occurred in 1814
a line omitted in 1827, “As by a duplicate at least, set
forth.”

Ll. 585-587 (1845); previously two lines; in 1814:

“A not unwholesome food, and earth and air
Supply his morbid humour with delight.”

In 1837:

“Food not unwholesome; earth and air correct
His morbid humour, with delight supplied.”

Ll. 591, 592 (1837); previously one line, “And shady
groves, for recreation framed.”

Ll. 624, 625 (1837); previously one line, “Or if the
Mind turn inward, ’tis perplexed,”

Ll. 687, 688 (1827); previously:

“. . . . ; and from that Height
Pure and serene, the Godhead overlook”.

L. 720 (1837); previously “Under a cope of varie-
gated sky.”

L. 749. The reference, as shown in a communication from
Mr. Heard to Professor Knight, is to statues of Mnesi-
mache and her son, mentioned by Pausanias i. 37, 3. The
mother is shown as cutting off her son’s hair to present to
the Cephissus. See Knight’s “Wordsworth,” vol. v. pp.
419-421.

L. 757 (1827); previously two lines:

“There shall be,—seen, and heard, and felt, and known,
And recognized,—existence unexposed”.

L. 804 was added in 1837.

L. 844 (1845); previously “Among wild mountains
and unpeopled heaths,”

L. 864. Professor Knight gives two experiments in MS. not used in the text and of considerable beauty :

“ Helped by the reflection of her own fair face,
Or rather say the lover at her side,
Looking with earnest eyes into the depth
Of a still lake amid the glimmering growth
Of plants that there were nourished.”

“ Helped by reflection of her own fair face,
Or, if not she, the lover at her side,
Some beautiful inhabitant who there
Might dwell in calm security unknown
To mortal credence. Hence the green-haired brood.”

L. 902 (1837); previously “ Who fled to caves, and woods, and naked rocks,”

Ll. 923, 924 (1845); previously :

“ In caves, in woods, and under dismal rocks,
Deprived of shelter, covering, fire, and food ;”

L. 947, “ spirits ” (1837); previously “ Souls.”

L. 970. Between this line and l. 971 occurred in 1814 a line (omitted in 1827), “ Or will his rites and services permit,”

L. 1001-1003 (1827, except the first line which dates from 1843); in 1814 :

“ His tottering Body was oppressed with flowers ;
Far less becoming ornaments than those
With which Spring often decks a mouldering Tree ! ”

In 1827-1837, “ His tottering body was with wreaths of flowers ”.

L. 1006, “ penned ” (1827); previously “ framed.”

L. 1087, “ tossed ” was added in 1837.

Ll. 1100-1106 (1827); previously :

“ In rueful tone
With some impatience in his mien he spake ;
And this reply was given.—”

L. 1117 (1827); previously “ For Him, to whom I speak, an easy road.”

Ll. 1138, 1139 (1845); previously three lines :

“ Brightened with joy ; for murmurings from within
Were heard,—sonorous cadences ! whereby,
To his belief, the Monitor expressed ”.

The parallel in Landor's "Gebir" will be remembered by lovers of English poetry.

L. 1184. On the reverberation of the raven's cry, see Wordsworth's note on "The leaves that rustled," etc. (vol. iv. p. 144). The lines in the text seem to be founded on a passage in Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal, July 26, 1800, describing the raven's cry and the ensuing echoes.

L. 1234. Between this line and l. 1235 occurred in 1814 two lines (omitted in 1827) :

"Convoked by knowledge ; and for his delight
Still ready to obey the gentle call."

Ll. 1239, 1240 (1827) ; previously :

"For them shall all things speak of Man, they read
Their duties in all forms ;"

Ll. 1270-1274 (1845) ; in 1814 :

". Whate'er we see,
Whate'er we feel, by agency direct
Or indirect shall tend to feed and nurse
Our faculties, shall fix in calmer seats
Of moral strength, and raise to loftier heights
Of love divine, our intellectual Soul."

A slightly varied reading appears in 1837.

Ll. 1284, 1285 were added in 1837.

L. 1288, "doctrine" (1837) ; previously "language."

L. 1309, "forth to greet them ran" (1827) ; previously
"forth in transport ran."

L. 1320, "lay" (1845) ; previously "slept."

Professor Knight gives from MS. three added lines at the close of this Book :

"Till every thought as gently as a flower,
That shuts its eyes at close of every day,
Had folded up itself in dreamless sleep."

BOOK V.

L. 3 (1827) ; previously two lines :

"And guardian rocks !—With unreverted eyes
I cannot pass thy bounds, attractive Seat !"

L. 12, "brown ridge, sole outlet of the vale" 1837) ; in

1814, "green Slope, the outlet of the Vale"; in 1827, "brown slope, the outlet of the vale."

Ll. 17-19 (1837); previously one line, "And now, pursuing leisurely my way,"

L. 28, "undisturbed repose" (1845); previously "calm forgetfulness."

L. 72. Between this line and l. 73 appeared in 1814 a line, omitted 1827, "To that injunction earnestly expressed".

Ll. 96-101 (1845); in 1814 :

" 'A popular equality doth seem
Here to prevail; and yet a House of State
Stands yonder, one beneath whose roof, methinks,
A rural Lord might dwell.' 'No feudal pomp,'
Replied our Friend, a Chronicler who stood
Where'er he moved upon familiar ground,
'Nor feudal power is there; but there abides,
In his allotted Home, a genuine Priest,"

Of these lines of 1814 the first three were in 1827 reduced to two :

" 'A popular equality reigns here,
Save for one House of State beneath whose roof".

L. 106 (1827); previously between "sway" and "He" occurred the words :

"collected round him

In this sequestered Realm."

L. 114. Before this line in 1814 occurred a line, omitted in 1827, "This good to reap, these pleasures to secure,"

Ll. 123-127 (1827, except "eyes" for "sight"—dating from 1837—in l. 123); previously :

"Is lengthened out by many a winding reach,
Not visible to us; and one of these
A turretted manorial Hall adorns;
In which the good Man's Ancestors have dwelt
From age to age, the Patrons of this Cure.
To them, and to his decorating hand,"

L. 133, "pausing" (1837); previously "halting."

L. 144, "raised in" (1827); previously "framed to."

Ll. 157-164 (1845); previously two lines :

"Some inoffensive marks of earthly state
And vain distinction. A capacious pew".

L. 167, "Thronging" (1827); previously "Upon."

Professor Knight gives from MS. variations of this description of the interior of the church. After his custom, Wordsworth brought together details found in several churches, but in the main the description follows the features of the church at Grasmere.

Ll. 237, 238 (1837); previously one line, "As unconcerned as when he plants a tree?"

In l. 239, "the sound" (1837) was previously "his voice."

L. 241. This line belongs to 1837, where it follows a line of 1814, omitted in 1845, "And from the company of serious words,"

L. 242 was added in 1837, with "looks" for "look" of 1845-1849.

L. 261, "her" (1827); previously "its."

L. 276, "loftiest" (1845) replacing "humblest" (1827), which replaced "unblest" (1814)—a curious change of epithet.

L. 360 (1845); previously "Whom the best might of Conscience, Truth, and Hope,"

L. 410 (1845); in 1814, "Foretelling total Winter, blank and cold." In 1843 as now, except "dreary" for "desolate."

L. 411, "bedeck" (1827); previously "adorn."

L. 427, "partake" (1827); previously "these share."

Ll. 449-451 (1837); previously two lines :

"Could have transferred him to his lonely House
Within the circuit of those guardian rocks."

L. 529, "forbidden" (1820); in 1814, "forbidding."

Ll. 531-535 (1827, except that it read, "snow has fallen And fields are white,"—altered in 1837); previously :

" 'Permit me,' said the Priest continuing, 'here
To use an illustration of my thought,
Drawn from the very spot on which we stand.
—In changeful April, when, as he is wont,
Winter has reassumed a short-lived sway
And whitened all the surface of the fields,
If—from the sullen region of the North
Towards the circuit of this holy ground
Your walk conducts you, ere the vigorous sun,
High climbing, hath attained his noon-tide height—
These Mounds,'"

L. 537 (1827); previously "A dreary plain of un-illuminated snow,"

L. 539. Between this line and l. 540 appeared in 1814 a line, omitted in 1827, "On the same circuit of this church-yard ground."

Ll. 547-548, "pall" (1837); previously "snow." L. 548 added in 1837.

L. 635. Between this line and l. 636 occurred in 1814 a line, omitted in 1827, "Held spiritual sway, have guided and consoled," with "And watched the," etc., in l. 636.

L. 667, "she" (1827); previously "it."

L. 691 (1845); previously "And on the bosom of the mountain dwell—"

L. 719, "true humility" (1845); previously "humbleness of heart."

L. 758, "aëry" (1837); previously "open," which occurred a few lines above.

L. 763 (1827); previously two lines :

"Far from all public road or beaten way
And traversed only by a few faint paths,"

Ll. 765-768 (1827, except in l. 766, "When night" and "hills" for "ground"—altered 1832); previously :

"(Such chance is rare) detains him till the night
Falls black upon the hills. 'But come,' she said,
'Come let me lead you to our poor Abode.
Behind those rocks it stands, as if it shunned,
In churlishness, the eye of all mankind;
But the few Guests who seek the door receive
Most hearty welcome.'—Entering, I beheld".

Ll. 778-780 (1845); in 1814 :

"But more was given; the eye, the mind, the heart,
Found exercise in noting, as we sate
By the bright fire, the good Man's face—composed
Of features elegant; an open brow".

In 1827 :

"But more was given; I studied, as we sate
By the bright fire, the good Man's face—composed
Of features elegant; an open brow".

L. 818, "blush to waste" (1827); previously "seldom waste".

Ll. 824-826 were added in 1845.

L. 853, "far" (1837); previously "for" (? misprint).

L. 877. Between this line and l. 878 occurred in 1814 three lines omitted in 1827 :

"See in this well-conditioned Soul, a Third
To match with your good Couple that put forth
Their homely graces on the mountain side."

L. 903, "mysteriously-united" (1845); previously "mysteriously-consorted."

L. 929, "makes" (1845); in 1814, "is"; in 1837, "yields."

Ll. 930-933 (1837); previously :

"A rueful sight the wild shore strewn with wrecks
And trod by people in afflicted quest
Of friends and kindred,"

L. 980, "claiming high distinction" (1827); previously "framed to high distinction."

BOOK VI.

L. 25 (1827); previously two lines :

"That can perceive, not less than heretofore
Our Ancestors did feelingly perceive,"

L. 97 (1827); previously two lines :

"A Visitor—intent upon the task
Of prying, low and high, for herbs and flowers :"

Ll. 119, 120 (1827); previously :

" and pined
When he had told his love, and sued in vain,"

Ll. 124-126 were added in 1827.

L. 136. Between this line and l. 137 appeared in 1814 three lines, omitted in 1827 :

"She, whose dear name with unregarded sighs
He long had blessed, whose Image was preserved—
Shrined in his breast with fond idolatry,"

Ll. 149-155 (1827); previously :

"Of rustic Parents bred, He had been trained,
(So prompted their aspiring wish) to skill

In numbers and the sedentary art
 Of penmanship,—with pride professed, and taught
 By his endeavours in the mountain dales.
 Now, those sad tidings weighing on his heart,
 To books, and papers, and the studious desk,
 He stoutly readdressed himself—resolved
 To quell his pain, and enter on the path
 Of old pursuits with keener appetite
 And closer industry. Of what ensued
 Within his soul, no outward sign appeared”.

L. 213, 214 (1827); previously :

“ One whose Endeavours did at length achieve
 A victory less worthy of regard,
 Though marvellous in its kind. A Place exists”.

L. 217 (1827, with “ who ” for “ they ”—altered 1837); previously :

“ In search of treasure there by Nature formed,
 And there concealed : but they who tried were foiled,”

Ll. 232, 233 (1827); previously :

“ the view
 Of the Old Man, and to his trembling grasp,
 His bright, his long-deferred, his dear reward.”

L. 300 (1827); previously :

“ Amid these wilds ; a Composition framed
 Of qualities so adverse—to diffuse,
 Where’er he moved, diversified delight ;
 A simple answer may suffice, even this,”

L. 328 (1827); previously :

“ And the Owl’s Prey ; none permanently house
 But many harbour ; from these Haunts, to which ”.

L. 359 (1827); previously :

“ —Truths I record to many known, for such
 The not unfrequent tenor of his boast ”.

L. 383. Between this line and l. 384 a line occurred in 1814, omitted in 1827, “ Whence’er rejected howsoe’er forlorn,”

L. 471, “ leaning ” (1845); previously “ change.”

L. 540 was added in 1845.

Ll. 570, 571 (1827); previously :

“ Beyond the limits of these humble graves,
Of strange disasters ; ”

L. 576 (1827); previously two lines :

“ For, though from these materials might be framed
Harsh portraiture, in which a vulgar face ”.

L. 673 was added in 1845.

L. 679 (1827); previously two lines :

“ And saturnine ; her port erect, her head
Not absolutely raised, as if to hold ”.

L. 689, “ seeking ” (1827); previously “ framed.”

L. 692, “ Over her comrades ” (1832); in 1814, “ Among
her Play-mates ”; in 1827, “ ’Mid her companions.”

Ll. 693, 694 (1827); previously :

“ Had wanted power to occupy a mind
Held in subjection by a strong controul
Of studious application, self-imposed.
Books were her creditors ; to them she paid,
With pleasing, anxious eagerness, the hours
Which they exacted ; were it time allowed,
Or seized upon by stealth, or fairly won,
By stretch of industry, from other tasks.”

L. 709, “ unremitting ” (1837); previously “ unrelenting.” “ Relenting ” occurs in l. 714.

Ll. 720-723 (1827); previously :

“ The injustice of her low estate.—She mused ;
Resolved, adhered to her resolve ; her heart
Closed by degrees to charity ; and, thence
Expecting not Heaven’s blessing, placed her trust ”.

Ll. 724-726 (1837); previously two lines :

“ In ceaseless pains and parsimonious care,
Which got, and sternly hoarded each day’s gain.”

Ll. 736, 737 (1837); in 1814 :

“ Down rocky mountains—buried now and lost
In silent pools, unfathomably deep ;—”

In 1827, “ pools, and now in eddies chained,—” ; in
1832, “ pools, now in strong eddies chained,—”

Ll. 738-740 (1827); previously :

“ Now, in a moment, starting forth again
With violence, and proud of its escape ;—
Until it sink once more, by slow degrees,
Or instantly, into as dark repose.”

L. 753, “ death-doomed ” (1845); previously “ dying.”

L. 755. Between this line and l. 756 occurred in 1814-1843 a line omitted in 1845, “ Sit by my fire—possess what I possessed.”

L. 757 (1827); previously two lines :

“ Enough ;—I fear too much.—Of nobler feeling
Take this example.—One autumnal evening,”

L. 760, “ Alone ” (1845); previously “ Musing.”

Ll. 766-774. This passage, added in 1845, was previously one line, “ And safe from all our sorrows ? She is safe,”

Ll. 778-781 (1827 except “ tow’rds ” for “ toward ” 1832); previously :

“ The Vicar paused ; and tow’rds a seat advanced,
A long stone-seat, framed in the Church-yard wall ;
Part under shady sycamore, and part
Offering a place of rest in pleasant sunshine,
Even as may suit the comers old or young”.

L. 785 (1827 with “ Under ” for “ Beneath,” introduced in 1837); previously :

“ To this commodious resting-place he led ;
Where, by his side, we all sate down ; and there ”.

Ll. 818-820 (1827); previously :

“ Upon the pathway, of her mournful tread ;
Nor of that pace with which she once had moved
In virgin fearlessness, a step that seemed ”.

L. 822, “ gemmed ” (1827); previously “ wet.”

Ll. 830-832 (1827); previously :

“ When first the Hunter’s startling horn is heard
Upon the golden hills. A spreading Elm
Stands in our Valley, called THE JOYFUL TREE ;
An Elm distinguished by that festive name,”

Ll. 855-859 (1837); previously :

"It was the season sweet, of budding leaves,
Of days advancing tow'rds ['tow'rd' 1832] their
utmost length,
And small birds singing to their happy mates.
Wild is the music of the autumnal wind
Among the faded woods; but these blithe notes".

Ll. 898-901 (1827); previously :

"And their long twilight!—friendly to that stealth
With which she slipped into the Cottage-barn,
And found a secret oratory there;
Or, in the garden, pored upon her book".

Ll. 911-913 (1827); previously :

"Far sweeter than bewildered Traveller feels
Upon a perilous waste, where all night long
Through darkness he hath toiled and fearful storm,"

Ll. 923, 924 (1845); previously :

". and henceforth, I look
Upon the light with cheerfulness, for thee".

L. 942, "fond" (1837); previously "sweet."

L. 947 (1845); previously "And with contented spirit
undertook".

Ll. 957-959 (1827); previously :

"In selfish blindness, for I will not say
In naked and deliberate cruelty,"

L. 961. Between this line and l. 962 occurred three
lines in 1814, omitted in 1827 :

"They argued that such meeting would disturb
The Mother's mind, distract her thoughts, and thus
Unfit her for her duty—in which dread,"

L. 1061, "to which she clung" (1827); previously "in
which she dwelt."

Ll. 1085-1093 (1827); previously :

"There doth he lie.—In this his native Vale
He owned and tilled a little plot of land;
Here, with his Consort and his Children, saw
Days—that were seldom crossed by petty strife,

Years—safe from large misfortune ; and maintained
 'That course which minds, of insight not too keen,
 Might look on with entire complacency.
 Yet, in himself and near him, there were faults
 At work to undermine his happy state
 By sure, though tardy progress. Active, prompt,
 And lively was the Housewife ; in the Vale
 None more industrious ; but her industry,
 Ill-judged, full oft, and specious, tended more
 To splendid neatness ; to a shewy, trim,
 And overlaboured purity of house ;
 Than to substantial thrift. He, on his part,
 Generous and easy-minded, was not free
 From carelessness ; and thus, in lapse of time,
 These joint infirmities induced decay
 Of worldly substance ; and distress of mind,
 That to a thoughtful Man was hard to shun,
 And which he could not cure. A blooming girl
 Served in the house, a Favourite that had grown
 Beneath his eye, encouraged by his care.
 Poor now in tranquil pleasure he gave way
 To thoughts of troubled pleasure ; he became
 A lawless Suitor to the Maid ; and she
 Yielded unworthily.—Unhappy Man !”

Ll. 1168-1170 (1845) ; previously :

“ from the sight
 Of the Bees murmuring round their sheltered hives
 In that Enclosure ; while the mountain rill,”

Ll. 1173-1175 (1827) ; previously :

“ Flows on in solitude from year to year.
 —But at the closing-in of night, then most
 This Dwelling charms me. Covered by the gloom,
 Then, in my walks, I oftentimes stop short,”

L. 1189 (1832) ; previously “The Wife, who rests
 beneath that turf, from which”.

There followed upon the present closing line of this
 Book in 1814, 1820, the following passage, omitted in
 1827 :

“The next three Ridges—those upon the left—
 By close connexion with our present thoughts
 Tempt me to add, in praise of humble worth,
 Their brief and unobtrusive history.

—One Hillock, ye may note, is small and low,
Sunk almost to a level with the plain
By weight of time ; the Others, undepressed,
Are bold and swelling. There a Husband sleeps,
Deposited, in pious confidence
Of glorious resurrection with the just,
Near the loved Partner of his early days ;
And, in the bosom of that family mold,
A second Wife is gathered to his side ;
The approved Assistant of an arduous course
From his mid noon of manhood to old age !
He also of his Mate deprived, was left
Alone—'mid many Children : One a Babe
Orphaned as soon as born. Alas ! 'tis not
In course of nature that a Father's wing
Should warm these Little-ones ; and can he *feed* ?
That was a thought of agony more keen.
For, hand in hand with Death, by strange mishap
And chance-encounter on their diverse road,
The ghastlier shape of Poverty had entered
Into that House, unfear'd and unforeseen
He had stepped forth, in time of urgent need,
The generous Surety of a Friend : and now
The widowed Father found that all his rights
In his paternal fields were undermined.
Landless he was and pennyless.—The dews
Of night and morn that wet the mountain sides,
The bright stars twinkling on their dusky tops,
Were conscious of the pain that drove him forth
From his own door, he knew not when—to range
He knew not where ; distracted was his brain,
His heart was cloven ; and full oft he prayed,
In blind despair, that God would take them all.
—But suddenly, as if in one kind moment
To encourage and reprove, a gleam of light
Broke from the very bosom of that cloud
Which darkened the whole prospect of his days.
For He who now possessed the joyless right
To force the Bondsman from his house and lands,
In pity, and by admiration urged
Of his un murmuring and considerate mind
Meekly submissive to the law's decree,
Lightened the penalty with liberal hand.
—The desolate Father raised his head and looked
On the wide world in hope. Within these walls,
In course of time was solemnized the vow

Whereby a virtuous Woman, of grave years
 And of prudential habits, undertook
 The sacred office of a wife to him,
 Of Mother to his helpless family.

—Nor did she fail, in nothing did she fail,
 Through various exercise of twice ten years,
 Save in some partial fondness for that Child
 Which at the birth she had received, the Babe
 Whose heart had known no Mother but herself.

—By mutual efforts ; by united hopes ;
 By daily-growing help of boy and girl,
 Trained early to participate that zeal
 Of industry, which runs before the day
 And lingers after it ; by strong restraint
 Of an economy which did not check
 The heart's more generous motions tow'rds themselves
 Or to their neighbours ; and by trust in God ;
 This Pair insensibly subdued the fears
 And troubles that beset their life : and thus
 Did the good Father and his second Mate
 Redeem at length their plot of smiling fields.
 These, at this day, the eldest Son retains :
 The younger Offspring, through the busy world,
 Have all been scattered wide, by various fates ;
 But each departed from the native Vale,
 In beauty flourishing, and moral worth."

BOOK VII.

L. 7, "sovereign brow" (1827); previously "craggy top."

Ll. 35, 36 (1827); previously three lines :

"Five graves, and only five, that lie apart,
 Unsociable company and sad ;
 And, furthermore, appearing to encroach".

Ll. 129-134 (1827, except that it retains "though slender, yet assured," changed to present text in 1837); in 1814-1820 :

"Had frolicked many a year ; a simple Clerk
 By hopes of coming patronage beguiled
 And vexed, until the weary heart grew sick.
 And so, abandoning each higher aim
 And all his shewy Friends, at length he turned

For a life's stay, though slender yet assured,
To this remote and humble Chapelry”.

The Chapelry was that of Wytheburn; Mr. Sympson's parsonage “still stands on the right or eastern side of the road, as you ascend Dunmail Raise beyond the Swan Inn” (Knight).

Ll. 139-144 (1837); previously :

“With which the scantily-provided Cure
Not long had been endowed : and far remote
The Chapel stood, divided from that House
By an unpeopled tract of mountain waste.”

L. 154. Between this line and l. 155 occurred in 1814 a line, omitted in 1827, “Month after month, in that obscure Abode”.

Ll. 160, 161 (1827); previously :

“Contentedly, to take a temperate meal
At his own board,”

L. 188, “festal” (1827); previously “festive.”

L. 203, “chequering” (1837); previously “upon.”

L. 241 (1827); previously “Without distinction falling upon both.” There followed in 1814-1820 these lines, omitted in 1827 :

“—Yoke-fellows were they long and well approved
To endure and to perform.

With frugal pains,

Yet in a course of generous discipline,
Did this poor Churchman and his Consort rear
Their progeny.—Of three—sent forth to try
The paths of fortune in the open world,
One, not endowed with firmness to resist
The suit of pleasure, to his native Vale
Returned, and humbly tilled his Father's glebe.
—The youngest Daughter, too, in duty stayed
To lighten her declining Mother's care.
But, ere the bloom was passed away which health
Preserved to adorn a cheek no longer young,
Her heart, in course of nature, finding place
For new affections, to the holy state
Of wedlock they conducted her; but still
The Bride adhering to those filial cares
Dwelt with her Mate beneath her Father's roof.”

L. 280 (1837); previously "Of open schemes, and all his inward hoard."

L. 316. The reference is to the Rev. R. Walker, of whom an account is given in the notes on the Duddon sonnets.

Ll. 351, 352 (1845); previously :

"Hither, ere long, that lowly, great, good Man
Will be conveyed. An unelaborate Stone".

L. 359, "shapes" (1827); previously "frames."

Ll. 361, 362 were added in 1845.

Ll. 382, 383, "o'er field, Hamlet, and town" (1827); previously "through fields And cottages."

Ll. 453, 454 (1837); previously :

"To the assembled spirits of the just,
From imperfection and decay secure."

Ll. 492, 493 (1845); in 1814 :

"To think of One, who cannot see, advancing
Towards ['Toward' 1832] some precipice's airy brink!"

The second line became in 1837, "Straight toward some precipice's airy brink!"

L. 496, "edge" (1827); previously "brink."

Ll. 579-581 (1827); previously :

"Nor disbelieves the tidings which he hears.
Meanwhile the incense offered up by him
Is of the kind which beasts and birds present".

L. 598. Between this line and l. 599 appeared in 1814 a line, omitted in 1827, "Transparent texture, framing in the east".

Ll. 605-607 (1827); previously :

". Help he gives
To lordly mansion rising far or near;
The enormous wheel that turns ten thousand spindles,"

L. 612 (1827); previously two lines :

"Among the mountain coves, or keen research
In forest, park, or chace. Yon household Fir,"

L. 621, "maidens" (1827); previously "lasses."

L. 623. Between this line and l. 624 occurred the following in 1814, omitted in 1827 :

“ Not one would have his pitiful regard,
For prized accommodation, pleasant use,
For dignity, for old acquaintance sake,
For ancient custom, or distinguished name.”

L. 626 (1827); previously “ And promising to stand from year to year,”

L. 637. The family of Gold-rill side were the Greens, of whom some account will be found in a note on this passage in Knight's “ Wordsworth.”

Ll. 639-641 (1827); previously :

“ Was given, the crown and glory of the whole !
Welcomed with joy, whose penetrating power
Was not unfelt amid that heavenly calm ”.

L. 650. Between this line and l. 651 occurred in 1814 a line, omitted in 1827, “ And from the laurel-shaded seat thereby ”.

Ll. 679-683 (1827); previously :

“ Range round the garden-walk, whose low ground-
flowers
Were peeping forth, shy messengers of spring,—
Even at that hopeful time,—the winds of March,
One sunny day, smiting insidiously,”

Ll. 686, 687 (1827); previously :

“ The Household lost their hope and soul's delight.
—But Providence, that gives and takes away
By his own law, is merciful and just ;
Time wants not power to soften all regrets,”

L. 694, “ bed ” (1837); previously “ grave.”

Ll. 695-697 (1837); previously two lines :

“ On a bright day, the brightest of the year,
These mountains echoed with an unknown sound,”

Ll. 715, 716 were added in 1827 ; previously in place of l. 718 stood two lines :

“ Spring's richest blossoms, yields a splendid show,
Amid the leafy woods : and ye have seen,”

L. 728, “ lavishly ” (1827) ; previously “ bounteously.”

Ll. 757, 758 (1837) ; previously with full stop after “ aim—” : “ From Gallia's coast a Tyrant's threats were

hurled ;” (1814) ; “ From Gallia’s coast a Tyrant hurled his threats ;” (1827).

Ll. 817-820 (1837) ; previously :

“ This spoken, from his seat the Pastor rose,
And moved towards the grave ;—instinctively
His steps we followed ; and my voice exclaimed,”

Ll. 837, 838 (1837) ; previously one line :

“ Why do ye quake, intimidated Thrones ?”

Ll. 868-870 (1827) ; previously :

“ (A natural failing which maturer years
Would have subdued) took fearlessly—and kept—
His wonted station in the chilling flood,
Among a busy company convened
To wash his Father’s flock. Convulsions dire”.

Ll. 922, 923 (1827) ; previously :

“ ‘ That task would foil.’ And, with these added words,
He thitherward advanced, ‘ Tradition tells’ ”.

Ll. 936, 937 (1827) ; previously :

“ When years admonished him of failing strength
And he no more rejoiced in war’s delights,”

Ll. 944-946 (1845) ; previously :

“ The Knight arrived, with pomp of spear, and shield,
And borne upon a Charger covered o’er
With gilded housings.”

BOOK VIII.

L. 5, “ began ” (1837) ; previously “ commenced.”

Ll. 21-24 (1837) ; in 1814 :

“ Though apprehensions crossed me, in the course
Of this self-pleasing exercise, that Ye
My zeal to his would liken, who, possessed
Of some rare gems, or pictures finely wrought,
Unlocks his Cabinet, and draws them forth
One after one,—soliciting regard”.

Before the final text was attained these lines were modified in 1827 and again in 1832.

L. 67, "apt agents to expel," (1827); previously "apt Instruments to excite,"

L. 79 (1827); previously "With healing words; and in remotest Wilds".

L. 111, "Britain's" (1827); previously "England's."

L. 113, "intercourse" (1837); previously "inter-change."

Ll. 115, 116 (1837); previously one line, "Or on the naked mountain's lofty side."

L. 152. Between this line and l. 153 occurred in 1814 a line omitted in 1827:

"Through strong temptation of those gainful Arts,"

L. 221, "grave" (1837); previously "plain."

Ll. 224, 225, "sway depends On" (1827); previously "sway is framed For".

L. 296 (1837); previously "Of her dull tasks and close captivity."

L. 304, "and roars through" (1837); previously "and in."

L. 305 (1827); previously "Or when the sun is rising in the heavens,"

Ll. 322, 323 (1845); in 1814:

"Thus gone for ever, this organic Frame
Which from heaven's bounty we receive, instinct
With light, and gladsome motions, soon becomes".

In 1827 (nearly identical with 1845):

"Is gone for ever; this organic Frame,
So joyful in her motions, is become".

In 1837 ll. 321-323 were reduced to two:

"The limbs increase; but this organic Frame,
So gladsome in its motions, is become".

L. 327, "its," a return of 1837 to 1814 text; in 1827-1832, "her."

L. 348 (1837); previously ". . . with their own blanched hair".

L. 353 (1837); previously "By savage Nature's unassisted care."

L. 359 (1827); previously "Are framed to strike dismay, but the outstretched hand".

Ll. 424-426 (1837); previously :

“ To which in after years he may be rouzed.
—This Boy the Fields produce : his spade and hoe,”

L. 434, “ ardent ” (1827); previously “ cheerful.”

L. 439 (1837); previously two lines :

“ Prompt utterance ; but, rising from our seat,
The hospitable Vicar interposed ”.

L. 442 (1827); previously “ Along a hedge of stately
hollies framed,”

Ll. 445-447 (1827); previously :

“ How sweet methought,
When the fierce wind comes howling from the north,
How grateful, this impenetrable screen ! ”

Ll. 484, 485 (1827); previously :

“ Nor must I leave unnoticed (leaving else
The picture incomplete, as it appeared
Before our eyes) ”

Ll. 500, 501 (1827); previously four lines :

“ — We enter ;—need I tell the courteous guise
In which the Lady of the place received
Our little Band, with salutation meet
To each accorded ? Graceful ”

L. 504, “ form ” (1827); previously “ frame.”

L. 520 (1827); previously two lines :

“ Here in cool shelter, while the scorching heat
Oppressed the fields, we sate, and entertained ”.

L. 526 (1827); previously “ Dropped from our minds ;
and even the shy Recluse ”.

Ll. 543, 545 (1827); previously :

“ He said, and with that exclamation breathed
A tender sigh :—but, suddenly the door
Opening, with eager haste two lusty Boys ”.

Ll. 549, 550 (1837); in 1814 :

“ And by the river-side—from whence they come,
A pair of Anglers, laden with their spoil.”

In 1827 :

“ And by the river’s margin—whence they come,
Anglers elated with unusual spoil ”.

Ll. 552-555 (1827) ; previously :

“ The Boy of plainer garb, and more abashed
In countenance,—more distant and retired.
Twin might the Other be to that fair Girl
Who bounded tow’rds us from the garden mount.
Triumphant entry this to him!—for see,”

L. 559 (1827) ; previously two lines :

“ Ranged side by side, in regular ascent,
One after one, still lessening by degrees ”.

BOOK IX.

L. 65, “ herself ” (1827) ; previously “ itself.”

L. 75, “ visits ” (1827) ; previously “ touches.”

L. 85 (1827) ; previously “ What more than this, that
we thereby should gain ”.

Ll. 133-135 (1827 with “ Vessel ” for “ chalice,” which
was substituted in 1832) ; in 1814 :

“ They sweep away infection from the heart ;
And, by the substitution of delight,
Suppress all evil ; ”

L. 138, “ force ” (1827) ; previously “ power.”

L. 156. Between this line and l. 157 appeared in 1814
a line, omitted in 1827, “ A most familiar object of our
days.”

L. 170, “ lamb ” (1827) ; previously “ Sheep.”

Ll. 225-228 (1845) ; previously one line, “ Foretasted,
immortality conceived.”

L. 255, “ fix,” a return in 1837 to reading of 1814 ; in
1827-1832 “ turn.”

L. 311 (1827) ; previously three lines :

“ This right, as sacred almost as the right
To exist and be supplied with sustenance
And means of life, the lisping Babe proclaims ”.

L. 318, “ godlike ” (1827) ; previously “ sacred.”

L. 346, “ breeds ” (1827) ; previously “ acts.”

Ll. 348, 349 (1827); previously :

“To breed commotion and disquietude,
Each might preserve”

Ll. 357, 358 (1827); previously :

“. . . . do alike require
That permanent provision should be made
For the whole people to be taught and trained.”

L. 390 (1845); in 1814, “With civil arts, and [‘that
1827] send their fragrance forth,”

Ll. 392, 393 (1827); previously :

“From Culture, universally bestowed
On Britain’s noble Race in freedom born ;
From Education, from that humble source,”

L. 395, “faithful ” (1827); previously “quiet.”

L. 421 (1837); previously “The Lake, though bright
is of a placid blue ;”

Ll. 469-473 (1845); in 1814 :

“Like those reflected in yon quiet Pool,
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
To great and small disturbances exposed.”

The present text, approached in 1837, and modified in
later editions, was attained in 1845.

Ll. 478-483 (1837); previously :

“—When we had cautiously embarked, the Pair
Now for a prouder service were address ;
But an inexorable law forbade,
And each resigned the oar which he had seized.
Whereat, with willing hand I undertook
The needful labour; grateful task !—to me ”.

Ll. 488, 489 (1837); previously :

“. . . —Now the reedy marge
Cleared, with a strenuous arm I dipped the oar,”

L. 497, “shape ” (1837); previously “bend.”

Ll. 530, 531 (1837); previously one line, “The beverage
drawn from China’s fragrant herb.”

L. 533, “raised ” (1837); previously “roused.”

L. 551, "Dying or dead;" (1837); previously "It seems extinct."

Ll. 566-568 (1827 with "Thus did the bark" and "Pursue"—altered 1837); in 1814:

"Thus did the Bark, meandering with the shore,
Pursue her voyage, till a point was gained
Where a projecting line of rock, that framed
A natural pier, invited us to land."

Ll. 570, 572 (1827); previously:

"We clomb a green hill's side; and thence obtained,
Slowly, a less and less obstructed sight".

In l. 573, "O'er" in 1837 replaced "Of"; in l. 574 "smooth" in 1827 replaced "whole"; in ll. 576, 577 the present text in 1827 replaced "presiding o'er the Vale And all her Dwellings"; in l. 578, "all" in 1845 replaced "the."

Ll. 581-584 (1827); previously:

"With resting-place of mossy stone;—and there
We sate reclined—admiring quietly
The frame and general aspect of the scene;
And each not seldom eager to make known".

Ll. 598, 599 (1837); in 1814:

"Pierced through their thin ethereal mould, ere we,
Who saw, of change were conscious, had become".

In 1827:

"Ere we, who saw, of change were conscious, pierced
Through their ethereal texture, had become".

L. 617, "effluence" (1827); previously "Image."

L. 670 (1837); previously "Whom morning wakes, among sweet dews and flowers."

Ll. 679-681 were added in 1827.

L. 692 (1827); previously "Of those dread Idols, some, perchance, received".

L. 701, "crystal" (1827); previously "spacious."

Ll. 740-742 (1827); previously:

"On your Abodes, and this beloved Land,
Our birth-place, home, and Country, while on Earth
We sojourn—loudly do I utter thanks
With earnest joy, that will not be suppressed."

Ll. 774, 775 (1827, with "given" for "made," which dates from 1845); previously :

"To the one Cottage in the lonely dell,
His chosen residence. But, ere he turned
Aside, a welcome promise had been given".

Ll. 777, 778 (1845); previously :

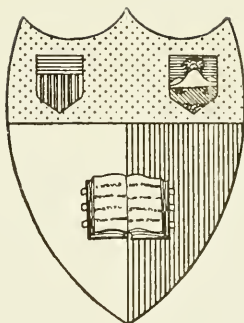
"Of yet another summer's day, consumed
In wandering with us through the Vallies fair,"—ED.

END OF VOL. VI.



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